



Volume 16, No. 3, Fall

# Word on Worship

Newsletter of the Worship Office,

---

In This Issue:

- Celebrating and Evaluating Advent and the Christmas Season
- Journeying through the Advent/Christmas Season with the Church's Blessings
- Christmas Liturgy for the Sake of the Children

“Comprising a period of seven weeks, the ... seasons of Advent and Christmastime will celebrate the self-emptying of God who takes on human nature in Jesus Christ, and in a marvelous exchange enables humans to take on the divine life of grace. This astonishing story was long prepared for and long awaited.”

So is described the beginning of a new liturgical year in a reflection written by Rev. Robert H. Slipe of St. Peter the Apostle Parish in River Edge. The liturgical prayer of these seasons, rich in word and symbol, has inspired many devotional, domestic, and even folk customs among Christians of all cultures. Each year parishes are challenged once again with the task of evaluating these customs in light of the Church's tradition. All too often practices become enshrined as **tradition** or **custom** without careful and serious consideration of how they may impact on the liturgical life of families and parish communities.

This tradition has been articulated most recently in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

“The coming of God's Son to earth is an event of such immensity that God willed to prepare for it over centuries.... When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present an ancient expectancy ... the faithful renew their ardent longing for his second coming.” (CCC 522, 524)

The quiet of Advent is a quiet expectancy: a mother waiting for pregnancy to come to term, the early riser waiting for the midnight blue to become a rosy dawn. This dark shade of blue-violet (a midnight or sarum blue) dominates the vestments and decorations of Advent. Such a practice keeps a clear distinction between the color of Advent and that of Lent. (Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter, September, 1988)

An Advent environment symbolically places the assembly on an oasis in the desert. Although it is not a penitential season, the Gloria is not sung so that the angels' proclamation of the birth of Jesus on Christmas can be prayed in Christian assemblies with renewed joy and enthusiasm.

Decorations are kept to a minimum. Special consideration is given to the placement of seasonal symbols such as the Advent wreath and the Jesse tree so that they do not overpower the primary symbols of altar and ambo. The mood of expectation is expressed in a variety of practices that involve incremental increases, i.e.,

the lighting of Advent candles and the use of various shades of color, which become lighter as the day of Christmas dawns.

As found in the Lectionary and Sacramentary, the season of Advent does not allow itself to be contained in annual themes. The richness and complexity of the season is pondered year after year as the mystery of God is filtered through the gospel proclamations. What is celebrated during Advent is much more than an historical event. Advent is about the here and now. It is about opening the human heart and allowing God to integrate that which has become fragmented, to focus on what is unclear, to give a new sense of hope to those who are discouraged, and to remind the faithful that the work of building the Kingdom is an ongoing process.

Devotional prayer and traditions have a special place during this family centered time of the year. Keeping Advent as a distinctive time of joyful and spiritual expectation involves confronting certain family and social customs. The book of Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, published by the United States Catholic Conference in 1988, offers many suggestions for faithfulness to the integrity of the season.

Since the sixth century, the Church has celebrated three Christmas Masses: Midnight, Dawn, and During the Day. The Christmas Vigil Mass was celebrated the morning

---

## CELEBRATING & EVALUATING ADVENT & THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

---

of December 24th. In 1967, special weekday Masses for Advent were added to the liturgical calendar to help the faithful prepare more directly for the celebration of the marvelous exchange of the divine and the human. At that same time, the Christmas Vigil Mass (with slightly modified texts) was moved to the evening. The celebration of this Mass ushers in the Christmas season.

It is important to note that the Christmas Vigil Mass is not the same as the anticipated Saturday evening Mass which is a celebration of the Sunday liturgy. Though it does celebrate the feast of Christmas, it has its own Mass text and its own scriptural readings. Christmas readings are first proclaimed at Midnight Mass.

In 1991, the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (BCL) raised concern about the solemnity of the celebration of Christmas day in many parishes:

"There is an increasing number of people participating in the Vigil Masses of Christmas with a corresponding decline in the number who are participating in the Masses on Christmas day. To accommodate these shifts, parishes are scheduling more vigil Masses and discovering that they need to eliminate Masses on Christmas day. **Children's liturgies** or **family liturgies** are scheduled for vigil Masses so that people (and, in some cases, clergy) do not need to be inconvenienced on Christmas morning. Gospel readings are changed so that the faithful can listen to the Christmas readings at the vigil..." (BCL, Nov./Dec.)

These trends call for the critical attention of all who prepare liturgy. They raise

many pastoral questions: Are more people participating in vigil Masses than in Masses on Christmas day? Are Masses of Christmas Day anti-climactic, under-attended, and lacking in the care and solemnity given to the celebration of vigil Masses? Is Christmas day celebrated as a sacred feast, a time set apart, or are parishes unconsciously yielding to the cultural values of convenience and secularization?

Some would argue that cultural awareness raises an interesting issue, which calls for a redefinition of the rationale for anticipated Masses. The custom of families waiting until Christmas morning to begin their celebration of Christmas is changing in many homes. If these families are to begin their festivities by celebrating the eucharist together, vigil Masses become a way of preserving **the religious nature** of Christmas, and parish leaders are challenged to find new ways of revitalizing the Masses of Christmas day. A response to such a cultural dilemma brings home the words of the Council Fathers, "... the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate faith or morals." (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 37) Yet, even in these matters, respect for the Church's customs and traditions demands a conscious awareness of the reasons for change.

The children's Christmas pageant presents another issue for consideration. In many parishes this has become a long-standing and much loved tradition. With every good intention, it has been absorbed into the Christmas Vigil Mass. Again pastoral questions are raised: Does the Christmas pageant become a spectator event celebrated in the context of a ritual that calls for "full, active and conscious participation"

of the entire assembly? Does the pageant draw attention away from the word proclaimed and the eucharistic ritual celebrated? Does the pageant become something in and of itself, or is it really the beginning of a great feast?

In places where the tradition of a pageant during Mass is firmly and emotionally rooted, it may be possible to initiate a gradual change, if leaders are guided by the spirit of the Lectionary for Masses with Children (LMC):

"The Mass is not a historical re-enactment of the events of salvation history and care should be taken not to give the impression that the liturgy of the word is a play." (LMC 52)

Dramatic elements may be introduced into the readings, e.g., use of multiple readers, particularly those with the proven ability to make the word come alive. Care is to be taken, however, that the sacred liturgy is not staged as a play to be appreciated by a spectator audience.

Another major challenge to those who prepare liturgy is the effort to extend the celebration of Christmas throughout the Christmas season, which concludes with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on the Sunday following Epiphany.

A key to the unlocking of this challenge is a restoration of the great feast of Epiphany, which in this country is now celebrated on the Sunday between the second and the eighth of January. The Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons (LTP) describes this feast as one that is "replete with symbols, scriptural allusions and home practices. The liturgy of this feast is a gold mine waiting to be explored by planners and

homilists." An appreciation of this gold mine begins with a solemn celebration of the eucharist on Epiphany that is virtually equivalent to that of Christmas.

Eventually, if Epiphany is to assume its rightful importance, it will become a magnet that collects many holiday observances that are now scattered throughout Advent. The **twelve days of Christmas** will become every bit as important as **shopping days before Christmas**. Office and school parties will bring new life to the tradition of **twelve days** as will choir concerts and children's pageants designed to focus on the Magi.

Repeated catechesis will be needed if parishes are to reclaim an authentic celebration of the feasts of the Advent and the Christmas season. Efforts to present the mystery of the Incarnation in its integrity will have a great spiritual and catechetical impact upon the lives of God's people. For this reason every effort must be made to hold on to its vision and to implement its subtle implications!

The reorientation of parish practices is always a process that takes time. This reflection is published now to encourage you to **EVALUATE** your 1998-99 celebration of Advent and the Christmas season. Many times pastoral leaders **PREPARE** long and hard, but failure to **EVALUATE** can impede progress. Both are necessary if parishes are to resist current trends and come to appreciate the common threads and the distinctiveness of each of these very special seasons. To evaluate now is to begin remote preparation for 1999-2000!+ Pat Bartle, D. Min. Director of the Office of Worship and Spirituality, Diocese of Paterson

---

---

# JOURNEYING THROUGH THE ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SEASON WITH THE CHURCH'S BLESSINGS

---

---

**W**ith the revision of the liturgical calendar and the Lectionary, the four weeks of Advent have taken on a vision that invites each and every Christian to see this season as one of **waiting in joyful hope**. Advent calls us to be a community immersed in a sense of anticipation for the coming of the Lord at the end of time even as we joyfully recall the nativity of Jesus Christ in history. However, that is not where

the significance of this liturgical season ends.

While recalling the past and looking to the future, the Christian is also challenged in this time of grace to remember that the Lord is Emmanuel – God-with-us. This name, spoken in prophecy by Isaiah in the Old Testament, sets the stage for the reality of the Incarnation. God has broken into the life of humanity and continues to do so in the daily life of every

person. "Advent is a time of waiting, listening, holding back, and discovering the beauty in both the night and the day.... The Christmas spirit springs from the delight and the terror of birth: the Word made flesh, the very presence of God with us." (Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, p. 108) This vision of the Advent/Christmas season – remembering the past, anticipating the future, celebrating the present — is, unfortunately, not the experience of most believers in society today.

Through all types of media advertisements, Christians are presented with a perspective that is in direct opposition to the true meaning of the Advent/Christmas season. This is especially true of children who become the unwitting targets of a highly organized media blitz and of the values found there. This can be seen at both ends of this liturgical season.

Radio and television commercials and department store decorations are only two of the ways through which society begins the Christmas season as early as Halloween. Consequently, Advent is completely bypassed. When December 26th arrives, believers are ready to discard any and all signs of this festive time. Christmas trees are taken down, nativity scenes are packed away and the family moves on to the next celebration, perhaps

Valentine's Day. Is there any wonder why this happens? All around them, Christmas has been going on for more than two months. It becomes more and more difficult for parishes to prayerfully celebrate the four weeks of Advent when believers are inundated with the signs and sounds of Christmas well before December 25th.

There is yet another challenge during this segment of the liturgical year. So much of the Advent/Christmas season focuses on the wonder and joy of this time for children. However, pastoral ministers must always help those whom they serve to see these weeks as a time of grace for all believers, not children alone. In many ways, our faith reminds us that the Word became flesh so that all people would come to know that they are cherished by a loving God. The significance of this reality is needed by all people, young and old alike and one way in which the Church celebrates this loving presence in the world is through her treasury of blessings.

In gathering for blessings and in their words and actions, the faithful encounter and put on the true attitudes of being **blessed**. In stark contrast to society's notions of material "blessedness," blessings teach and remind us of the true gifts of life, the favors that sustain life and the nature of the gifts for which one should ask God.





Blessings focus the mind and heart of believers on the mysteries of salvation and on the very source of all good gifts, the Lord himself.

"Blessings therefore refer first and foremost to God, whose majesty and goodness they extol." (Book of Blessings, BB 7) In addition, "they (blessings) are... meant to declare and to manifest the newness of life in Christ that has its origin and growth in the sacraments of the New Covenant established by the Lord. In addition, ...blessings are signs above all of spiritual effects that are achieved through the Church's intercession." (BB 10)

Two resources — the Book of Blessings and Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers — offer parishes and families a number of ritual celebrations for use during Advent/Christmas and throughout the year. The use of these resources fosters a liturgical spirit and provides a supportive catechesis that highlights the true nature of the Advent/Christmas cycle. In addition, the blessings provided for these sea-

sons advance the understanding and experience of celebrating Advent/Christmas as seasons intimately connected rather than a preparation time leading to a celebration of a day.

Three particular blessings immediately come to mind as the Christian community draws closer to Christmas day: the Advent wreath, the Christmas manger and the Christmas tree. A fourth — the blessing of homes — helps the faithful to realize that this season does not end with Christmas day, but continues on. The Book of Blessings and Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers provide ways in which these experiences can be celebrated at home in a way that will support Christian formation for the entire family.

#### THE ADVENT WREATH

The first to be considered is the Advent wreath. "The use of the Advent wreath is a traditional practice which has found its place in the Church as well as in the home." (BB 1509) When used at home, the blessing of the Advent

wreath takes place on the evening before the First Sunday of Advent or on the First Sunday of Advent itself. (BB 1509) It is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another member of the family. The Book of Blessings provides the order for the blessing of an Advent wreath with appropriate rites and prayers for a lay person as well as a suggestion for alternate readings for the blessing rite. All of this is made explicit and simple for family use in Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers.

The simple ceremony of the lighting of the Advent wreath on Sunday or on weekdays is a way to connect what happens in church to the intimate family circle and becomes a reminder that the family is part of a larger community. This becomes an opportunity for children to see that the family's prayer is also the Church's prayer.

#### THE CHRISTMAS CRECHE

One need only travel around a neighborhood or city in the weeks preceding Christmas

#### Staff

##### Editor:

Rev. Michael A. Saporito

##### Design/Layout:

Rev. Michael C. Santoro

##### Editorial Board:

Joan Conroy

Sr. Sandra DeMasi, SSJ

Rev. Thomas A. Dente

Rev. Peter K. Funesti

Dr. E. Regina Giuliani

Msgr. Richard Groncki

Rev. Thomas B. Iwanowski

Sr. Marlene Milasus, OSB

Sr. Gerardine Mueller, OP

Rev. Michael C. Santoro

William Shlala

##### Contributors:

Dr. Pat Bartle,

Rev. Robert G. Laferrera,

Carol Willis and the staff of the

Worship Office

#### Subscription Information

One year subscription to *Word on Worship*, 4 issues, \$10.00. Special Bulk rate, five or more issues to the same address, \$8.50 per year per subscription. Foreign subscription, \$13.50 per year. To begin your subscription call 973/497-4345.

#### Website

[www.rcan.org/rcan/worship.htm](http://www.rcan.org/rcan/worship.htm)

to notice that decorations abound, some religious, most secular. One of the most prominent images of the season is the Christmas manger or nativity scene. Popularized by St. Francis of Assisi, it was intended to make the mystery of the Incarnation more tangible for Christian people. (BB 1541)

In all likelihood, a nativity scene is found in the homes of most Christian families, even those with little connection with their parish. While the crèche depicts the birth of Christ in history, the prayer of blessing reminds its hearers that our focus at Christmas is in on the Incarnation — God-with-us — forever. The Book of Blessings also indicates that the blessing of the nativity scene, according to pastoral circumstances, may take place on the vigil of Christmas or at another more suitable time. (BB 1542)

While another time is an option, clearly the first preference is the evening before Christmas. This reminds those who consider using this blessing that there is a need to respect the integrity of the weeks of Advent and not rush to celebrate Christmas too quickly. Once again, this blessing can take place in the home where "...it is appropriate that it (the manger scene) be blessed by a parent or another family member." (BB 1545)

#### THE CHRISTMAS TREE

"The use of the Christmas tree is relatively modern. Its origins are found in the medieval mystery plays which depicted the tree of paradise and the Christmas light or candle which symbolized Christ, the Light of the world." (BB 1570) In the present age, the religious significance of the Christmas tree has

been almost completely lost. One explanation often given for the origin of the Christmas tree is rooted in a secular origin. Germanic tribes would bring a fir tree into their homes as a sign of life in the midst of the death of winter. There is seldom any mention of lights on a tree.

The primary place of the Christmas tree is the home. (BB 1571) Most families set up and decorate the Christmas tree as part of the progressive preparation for Christmas. Where this is the case, the lighting and blessing of the Christmas tree may suitably take place on Christmas eve, even in connection with the evening meal. This would be especially appropriate if the lighting of the Advent wreath has taken place throughout the season at the evening meal.

#### THE HOME

The fourth blessing for use during the Advent/Christmas season is the blessing of the home. This blessing is already found in a number of cultures, especially Eastern European cultures, where the Christmas season, especially the feast of Epiphany, is the traditional time when homes may be blessed.

#### THE NEW YEAR

There is little need to detail the customs connected with New Year's eve and day. Parties, football games, hats and horns are all part of the mystique of the birth of the new year. The Church, while not seeking to negate celebrations connected with the new year, does propose that it be a day of prayer, that Christ's peace will finally envelope the peoples and nations of the world. During the Advent/Christmas season there is a blessing for the New Year.

"On New Year's eve or New Year's day, the household gathers at the table or at the Christmas tree or manger scene.... The calendar of the new year may be held during the blessing." (Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, p. 121) The rite recommends silent time for prayers of thanksgiving for the past year and intercessory prayer for the year to come. In keeping with the liturgical feast, appropriate prayers honoring Mary, the Mother of God are also suggested. The unity of family is shown, not only by the gathering together, but also by the parents placing their hands on their children in blessing.

The Book of Blessings and Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers are both wonderful treasures of rites that can be celebrated well within the homes of the Christian faithful. "At all times and in every situation, then, the faithful have an occasion for praising God through Christ in the Holy Spirit, for calling on divine help, and for giving thanks in all things...." (BB 13) Journeying through the Advent/Christmas season with the Church's blessings can further form the faithful in the Christian life and offer them the opportunity to enhance the spiritual life of the domestic Church.+

Rev. Robert G. LaFerrera  
Associate Director - Worship  
Office

THE ADVENT WREATH  
Book of Blessings 1521-1534 and Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers p. 110-112.

THE CHRISTMAS CRECHE  
Book of Blessings 1547-1561 and Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, p. 117-120.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE  
Book of Blessings 1576-1591; Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, p. 113-116

THE HOME  
Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers p. 126-129.

THE NEW YEAR  
Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, p. 121-125.

---

# CHRISTMAS LITURGY

## FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILDREN

---

For the sake of their children, parents and guardians make decisions about health, friends, and education that affect the children's future as well as their present.

As Church, we, too, care about children. Concerned for their spiritual well-being, we work to help them grow in their relationship with God in the context of the faith community. Such growth involves a deepening of the awareness of and commitment to the action of his Spirit in the whole of our lives at every moment. (Music in Catholic Worship, MCW 2) Just as decisions about health, friends, and education do not reap immediate results so, too, the spiritual journey is one that takes place over the span of our lives.

For the sake of the children, we prepare liturgies so that

the children might participate fully and actively in the worship of our community. Again, we work with children's experience in proportion to their age and personal development. (Directory for Masses with Children, DMC 9) Perhaps the uncomplicated life of a child can teach us something about such preparations.

While our focus here is one particular Mass for Christmas, the one in which the largest number of young children participate, and the surrounding seasons of Advent and Christmas, sound liturgical and catechetical principles should guide any discussion or preparation of liturgy. An essential ingredient of such a discussion is a realization of what liturgy is and is not.

• The Church's deepest call-

ing is to praise God. (Lectionary for Masses with Children, LMC 3) This praise assumes many forms and styles; the most important is liturgy. Liturgy is our dialogue with God, the action of God's people united with the Risen Christ celebrating the covenant made long ago in that same Christ. The eucharist is our reason for being Church. Having been gathered together, having listened to God's word, having given thanks and praise, having been nourished at the eucharistic table, we are empowered to go forth to live the good news we have heard and celebrated. We can do this because liturgy has the power to form and transform all who participate young and old, well and infirm, saints and sinners. The high point of the Christmas celebration, therefore, is participation in

the liturgy.

- Liturgy always celebrates some facet of a single mystery, the paschal mystery the central mystery of our faith. In ritual prayer, past and future are caught up into God's eternal presence. (LMC 26) Christmas does not merely celebrate the birth of a child; rather this great feast celebrates the Incarnation (birth) of the Lord of history in our world... It is the beginning of the paschal mystery and inevitably leads to his saving passion and resurrection. (LMC 43)
- Liturgy is the prayer of the whole people of God. As such, it calls for the full, conscious, and active participation of all assembled. (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 14) Liturgical prayer should never isolate a particular segment of the community, whether children or adults. When we



focus our attention on one group to the exclusion of others, we encourage the latter to become spectators. The thrust of the preparation of the Christmas liturgy, therefore, should not be as a celebration for children; liturgy is celebrated with children as part of the entire assembly.

- Liturgy is not a catechetical session, an introduction to biblical history (LMC 24) nor an historical reenactment of the events of salvation history. (LMC 52) The Christmas pageants and plays that invade our liturgy at Christmas Eve Masses are better suited and more effective (and less distracting) in a catechetical setting.
- Liturgy is ritual prayer. It should never appear dry and intellectual. (DMC 35) The many aspects of ritual done well heighten our awareness of a powerful experience that is beyond the rational. Symbols, processions, gestures, incense, music, pace, dialogue, and silence, all have the power to reveal something of the divine in our midst as well as to engage those present more fully in the worship experience. (LMC 22; DMC 22) In our liturgical preparation of the Christmas liturgies, there is no need to add to the liturgy of the Church. It is in the Church's liturgy celebrated well that we discover the mystery of the Incarnation and are transformed into the likeness of the Risen Christ.
- Liturgy and catechesis support each other, but one does not do the job for the other. Pre-liturgical catechesis promotes more fruitful participation in the liturgy and allows it to accomplish its own purpose, namely, the

communal worship of God. By celebrating the liturgical calendar as it evolves during the season of Advent, local parishes have a tremendous opportunity to expand the community's understanding of the Incarnation event. Offering good catechesis and family traditions will support the authentic celebration of the Christmas liturgy.

- Neither liturgy nor catechesis seeks to explain away the mystery that is God. It is in the celebration of the Christmas liturgies that the marvelous exchange of God bursting forth into humanity and humanity being transformed into God's image is made real. How can we explain that?

Once on-going catechesis and Advent calendar activities place Christmas in its true light, the celebration of Christmas Mass becomes the focus of the community. Attention can then be given to how best celebrate it with children.

- The Directory for Masses with Children encourages us to choose a time when children may be most open to hearing the word of God and to celebrating the eucharist. (26) Parishes might consider a Christmas morning liturgy, e.g., 9:00 or 10:30, when children are awake, have opened their presents, and are more ready to join in the celebration.
- Often those assembling are rushing, no matter what time Mass is. Provide some quiet time for the assembly to gather spiritually.
- Celebrating well does not mean wordiness. Keep words to a minimum, but make them beautiful, worthy of such a feast. Direct some comments to the children. (DMC 23) Creatively

use the greeting to lead into the Glory to God, followed by the opening prayer, omitting the penitential rite. (DMC 40)

- Children, as well as the rest of the community, are quite open to the power of story. (LMC 48) Have some of the best readers proclaim God's word. These readings come from the Sunday Lectionary. The readings from the Lectionary for Mass with Children are not used on Christmas. Remember, the word of God at Mass cannot be replaced by a pageant depicting the gospel story. (LMC 52) Speak directly to the children at some points during the homily, but do not focus entirely on the children.
- The power of ritual movements and gestures cannot be overemphasized. Call attention to the Incarnation during the creed by genuflecting at the words "by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man." (General Instruction on the Roman Missal, GIRM 98) The gestures assigned to the presider, e.g., "The Lord be with you" and the final blessing, should be solemn and ample.
- Full, conscious and active participation occurs on several levels, one of which is the procession. Children may present the gifts of bread and wine. Gifts for the poor may also be presented at this time, but not placed on the altar. (GIRM 49)
- The flow of any liturgy, and this one in particular, is toward the eucharistic mystery, which comes to a climax in sacramental communion. All ministers, including ushers, should be especially attentive at this time, so that those who can, the young and the not

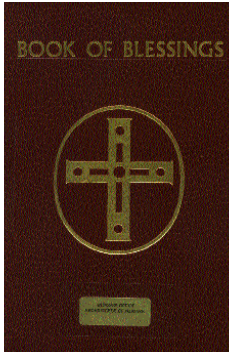
so young, may come to the table with an interior calm and fully partake in the eucharistic mystery. (DMC 54)

- "Among the many signs and symbols used by the Church to celebrate its faith, music is of preeminent importance ... the function of music is ministerial; it must serve and never dominate." (MCW 23) Festive settings of music are most appropriate for Christmas. Carols work best, since so many are familiar with them.

The final purpose of all liturgical and eucharistic formation is a greater and greater conformity to the gospel in the daily life of the children. (DMC 15) As those responsible for preparing liturgies with children we need to ask ourselves: What have we done for the sake of the children? How have they grown in their relationship with the Holy One? "Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken and destroy it." (MCW 6) Christmas is such an exciting time for all of us! Since the liturgy is the peak experience of a Christian celebration of Christmas, it must be one of joy and good celebration. Guests and strangers alike need to experience the hospitality of the community so that Emmanuel, God-with-us, can be known on a deeper level and so that those present may seek to incorporate a bit of that mystery into their daily lives. At Christmas or anytime, this is the greatest gift we give to children and ourselves, for the future as well as the present. +

Carol Willis  
Pastoral Associate  
St. Paul, Ramsey

# ORDER NOW!



## **Book of Blessings**

**\$17.95**

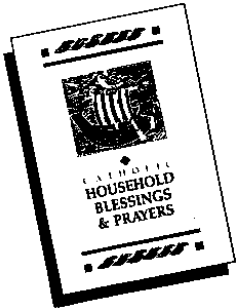
The Roman ritual for the celebration of blessings.

## **Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers**

**\$9.95**

Prayer happens not only in the Sunday liturgy, but also in the households of the faithful. With this in mind, and building on the **Book of Blessings**, this collection of blessings and prayers is an expression of a way of life rooted in the Christian family and Christian prayer.

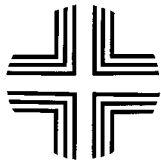
To order call: (973) 497-4345, Fax (973) 497-4348 (9:30 AM - 4:30 PM) or mail this order form to : THE WORSHIP OFFICE, PO Box 9500, NEWARK, NJ 07104-9500



NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PARISH \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity	Item	Unit Price	Total
_____	<i>BOOK OF BLESSINGS</i>	\$17.95	_____
_____	<i>CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS</i>	\$ 9.95	_____
	ADD 10% FOR SHIPPING AND HANDLING		_____
	TOTAL		_____



Worship Office  
PO Box 9500  
Newark, NJ 07104-9500

NON-PROFITORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PermitNo. 5406  
NEWARK, NJ