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ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE



The following short services of blessing are actually part of the official liturgy of the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church but can be led by lay men or women in their own homes. The first is the full-length version of the rite. For a more abbreviated version, scroll down. Both forms of the Christmas Tree Blessing Service are excerpted from the Book of Blessings.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

979 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.

980 According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and may remain in place until the solemnity of Epiphany. Although the primary place for the Christmas tree is the home, at times one or more may also be placed in the church. In such a case, the decoration of the trees should be appropriate to their use in the church, and care should be taken that they do not interfere with the requirements of the liturgical space.

981 The Christmas tree may be blessed on or before Christmas during a celebration of the word of God, or during Morning or Evening Prayer. If the blessing is celebrated during Morning or Evening Prayer, it takes place after the gospel canticle. The intercessions, Lord's Prayer, and prayer of blessing replace the intercessions and concluding prayer of Morning or Evening Prayer.

982 The lights of the tree are illuminated after the prayer of blessing.

983 In the home the Christmas tree may be blessed by a parent or another family member, in connection with the evening meal on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time on Christmas Day; the shorter rite may be used for this purpose.

984 These orders maybe used by a priest or a deacon, and also by a layperson, who follows the rites and prayers designated for a lay minister.

I. ORDER OF BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE

INTRODUCTORY RITES

985 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:

Amen.

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

Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and for ever.

988 in the following or similar words, the minister prepares those present for the blessing.

**My brothers and sisters,
amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea:
his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this
tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its
lights guide us to the perfect light.**

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

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

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the apostle Paul to Titus: 3:4-7
His own compassion saved us.

**But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared,
not because of any righteous deeds we had done
but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and
renewal by the holy Spirit,
whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior,
so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of
eternal life.**

990 Or:

Genesis 2:4-9 --The tree of life in the center of the garden.

Isaiah 9:1-6 --A son is given to us

Ezekiel 17:22-24 --I will plant a tender shoot on the mountain heights of Israel.
991 As circumstances suggest, the following responsorial psalm may be sung, or some other suitable song.

R. Christ comes to enlighten us.

Psalm 96

**Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all you lands.
Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
announce his salvation, day after day. R.**

**Tell his glory among the nations;
among all peoples, his wondrous deeds.
For great is the LORD and highly to be praised; awesome is he, beyond all
gods. R.**

**For all the gods of the nations are things of nought, but the LORD made the
heavens.**

**Splendor and majesty go before him; praise and grandeur are in his
sanctuary. R.**

**Give to the LORD, you families of nations, give to the LORD glory and
praise; give to the LORD the glory due his name! Bring gifts, and enter his
courts; worship the LORD in holy attire. R.**

**Tremble before him, all the earth; say among the nations: The LORD is
king. He has made the world firm, not to be moved; he governs the peoples
with equity. R.**

**Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice; let the sea and what fills it
resound; let the plains be joyful and all that is in them! Then shall all the
trees of the forest exult before the LORD, for he comes; for he comes to
rule the earth. R.**

He shall rule the world with justice and the peoples with his constancy. R.

992 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.

INTERCESSIONS

993 The intercessions are then said. The minister introduces them and an assisting minister or one of those present announces the intentions. From the following those best suited to the occasion may be used or adapted, or other intentions that apply to the particular circumstances may be composed.

The minister says:

Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord.

R. Lord, give light to our hearts.

Assisting minister:

That the Church may always reflect the joy of Jesus Christ who enlightens our hearts, let us pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister:

That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister:

That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let us pray to the Lord. R.

Assisting minister:

That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world, let us pray to the Lord. R.

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

With confident faith let us pray as Christ taught us:

All:

Our Father ...

PRAYER OF BLESSINGS

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

Lord our God,

we praise you for the light of creation:

the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.

We praise you for the light of Israel:

the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.

We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:

he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace, who fills us with the wonder of your love.

Lord God,

let your blessing come upon us as we illumine this tree. May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy that fills our hearts.

May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge and joy of salvation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

996 Or:

Holy Lord, we come with joy to celebrate the birth of your Son, who rescued us from the darkness of sin by making the cross a tree of life and light.

May this tree, arrayed in splendor, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ, that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in our hearts. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The candles or lights of the tree are then illuminated.

997 During the illumination of the tree, the cantor or another minister leads the congregation in singing the following acclamations to Christ, or some other suitable hymn, such as "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel."

Lord Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary.

R. We welcome you, O Lord.

Lord Jesus, hope of the shepherds and the poor.

R. We welcome you, O Lord.

Lord Jesus, glory of the angels.

R. We welcome you, O Lord.

CONCLUDING RITE

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

May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.

R. Amen.

1000 It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.

II. BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE - SHORTER RITE

1001 All make the sign of the cross as the minister says:

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All reply:

Now and for ever.

1002 One of those present or the minister reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the apostle Paul to Titus: 3:4-7
His own compassion saved us.

But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

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Excerpted from the [Shorter Book of Blessings](#) (NY: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1990). Approved for use in the United States by the USCCB and the Holy See. The [Shorter Book of Blessings](#) is an abbreviated version of the Book of Blessings, which translates the Roman Ritual De Benedictionibus. The [Shorter Book of Blessings](#) are available in the [Catholic Book section](#) of our resources by calling 800-803-0118.

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