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Commissioning Service

This ceremony for the blessing and commissioning of catechists is intended to take place at the Eucharistic liturgy on Catechetical Sunday. If this is not possible, the blessing and commissioning may be celebrated at Mass at another time, or it may be used outside of Mass, perhaps with the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours or at a simple commissioning service. The rite of blessing that follows is from the Book of Blessings, Chapter 4, Section I, "Order for the Blessing of Those Appointed as Catechists."

In the homily, the celebrant gives an explanation of the celebration of catechesis that is based on the sacred text. Following the homily, the celebrant, deacon, or other suitable minister calls the catechists to come forward, either individually by name or as a group. The celebrant may then introduce the blessing, using the following or other similar words.

Order of Blessing Within Mass

Introduction of Catechists

The celebrant addresses the assembly.

CELEBRANT:

For the pastoral activity of the Church, the cooperation of a great many people is needed, so that communities as well as individuals may advance to full maturity in faith and continually show forth their faith through the celebration of the liturgy, through study, and through their manner of life.

This cooperation is provided by those who devote themselves to catechesis. Enlightened by God's Word and the teaching of the Church, catechists impart to others an initiation or a deeper formation in those realities that they themselves have learned as truths to be followed in living and to be celebrated in liturgy.

In this celebration we will bless the name of the Lord for giving us such co-workers and pray that through the Holy Spirit they will receive the grace they need in their service to the Church.

Blessing of Catechists

Addressing catechists new to the ministry, a deacon or veteran catechist says the following:

DEACON OR VETERAN CATECHIST:

Would those who are willing to serve as catechists in [name of parish] please stand?

Or ask them to come forward, depending on the number and the place.

CELEBRANT:

Now I ask you, are you willing to exercise the ministry of catechesis here at [name of parish]?

CATECHISTS:

With the help of God, I am ready and willing to serve as a catechist along with all the catechists of this parish.

CELEBRANT:

May God help you to be good stewards to what has been entrusted to you, and may you and all the catechists who serve in this parish receive the grace you need for your service here at [name of parish].

General Intercessions

The general intercessions follow the introduction to the blessing. These intercessions may be used in whole or in part. Always include your own intentions for local needs.

CELEBRANT:

God created us to live and grow in love. By being stewards of God's gifts, we take an active part in bringing this vision of life into being. Confident in the power of prayer to transform us, we bring our needs to God who hears and answers us.

ASSISTING MINISTER:

The response is, "Lord, hear our prayer:"

For the Church: May it grow stronger in its resolve to welcome and embrace those who are living on the margins of society. For this, we pray to the Lord: **R/**.

For the leaders of nations: May their first concern be to preserve and foster peace through compassionate policies and just systems. For this, we pray to the Lord: **R/**.

For those who suffer from physical and mental illness: May they be healed through God's infinite mercy and be comforted by those who care for them. For this, we pray to the Lord: **R/**.

For families: May they grow stronger in their love and commitment to one another. For this, we pray to the Lord: **R/**.

For catechists: May they be blessed with creativity and enthusiasm as stewards of God's gifts. For this, we pray to the Lord: **R/**.

Blessing

The blessing of catechists follows the general intercessions. As an alternative, the prayer of blessing may be used at the end of Mass after an invitation such as, "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing."

With hands outstretched, the celebrant prays the blessing for the catechists.

CELEBRANT:

With your fatherly blessing, Lord, strengthen these servants of yours in their resolve to dedicate themselves as catechists. Grant that they will strive to share with others what they themselves derive from pondering your Word and studying the Church's teaching. And let them gladly join those they teach in honoring and serving your name.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **R/. Amen.**

or

CELEBRANT:

Lord God, source of all wisdom and knowledge, you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to live among us and to proclaim his message of faith, hope, and love to all nations. In your goodness bless our brothers and sisters who have offered themselves as catechists for your Church. Strengthen them with your gifts, that they may teach by word and by example the truth that comes from you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **R/. Amen.**

After the prayer of blessing, each catechist may be presented with a Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and/or a certificate of commissioning. If desirable, the congregation may signify its support by applause, an acclamation, or an appropriate hymn.

Note: Some parishes offer a "Response Sunday" the week after Catechetical Sunday. On that day, following the homily, the celebrant reminds the community of the commissioning of the catechists. He asks the community to respond to the parish catechetical ministry by pledging to give it the support and involvement it deserves. A statement of "I do" from the community may be the affirmative response.

Blessing of Parents and Guardians (optional)

Following the prayer after communion, this special blessing for parents and guardians may be offered as recognition of their critical role in forming their children in faith.

CELEBRANT:

Parents and guardians are entrusted with a special role and responsibility in forming their children in faith. It is fitting on this Catechetical Sunday that we offer a blessing for them.

The celebrant invites parents and guardians to stand. Stretching out his hands over them and inviting the rest of the community to do the same, he prays the following:

CELEBRANT:

God our Father, let your peace settle within the hearts of these mothers, fathers, and guardians. Give them strength and wisdom as they care for their children. Show them how to raise their families with patience and tenderness. Give them strength during the times of greatest difficulty and help them recognize the little joys that are part of each day. May they grow in wisdom, understanding, and grace.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is one with you and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. **R/. Amen.**

Rite of Blessing Outside of Mass

The blessing for catechists, when celebrated outside of the Eucharist, may be incorporated into a prayer service or Liturgy of the Hours. Or it may be used along with the following celebration of the Word, taken from the Book of Blessings, Chapter 4, Section I, "Order for the Blessing of Those Appointed as Catechists."

Introductory Rites

The celebration starts with an appropriate song and continues with the following greeting.

CELEBRANT:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R/. Amen.

CELEBRANT:

May God the Father of mercies, who wills that all be saved, be with you.

ALL:

And also with you.

CELEBRANT:

The cooperation of a great many people is needed if individuals and communities are to grow to full maturity in faith through prayer and the celebration of the sacraments, through study, and through their way of living.

Those who devote themselves to the ministry of catechesis play a vital role in the Church's pastoral activity. Enlightened by God's Word and the teaching of the Church, and inspired by their own life of prayer and witness, catechists lead others to know the living Jesus Christ through word and deed. Through the ministry of catechesis, catechists provide a process of initiation and formation for those in their care, introducing them to the truths of faith, which they themselves have learned, lived, and celebrated.

In this celebration we will bless the name of the Lord for giving us such co-workers and will pray that through the Holy Spirit they will receive the grace they need in their service to the Church.

Reading of the Word

A reader, another person present, or the celebrant reads either the following text or another suitable for the occasion.

READING

Romans 10:9-15

PSALM RESPONSE

Psalm 96

R/. Proclaim his marvelous deeds to all the nations.

Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all you lands.
Sing to the Lord, bless his name. **R/.**

Announce his salvation, day after day.
Tell his glory among the nations;
among all peoples, his wondrous deeds. **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! **R/.**

Say among the nations: The Lord is king.
He has made the world firm, not to be moved;
he governs the people with equity. **R/.**

General Intercessions

CELEBRANT:

Since God wills the salvation of all, let us pray to him in these words: "Lord, draw all people to yourself." (Or: "Lord, hear our prayer.")

ASSISTING MINISTER:

God of all creation, we long for a world transformed by peace and bound together in love. Fill us with hope, and remind us to turn to you with our needs and our prayers. For this we pray: **R/.**

Strengthen and multiply those called to catechetical ministry, and show us how to support and encourage their work. For this we pray: **R/.**

Give us a sense of urgency and passion as we proclaim the holy Gospel. For this we pray: **R/.**

Give us courage to speak the truth and to stand firm in our call for international justice. For this we pray: **R/.**

Open us to listen to others with a spirit of compassion and empathy. For this we pray: **R/.**

Remind us of the ways we can serve those in our midst who are overlooked, ignored, or rejected. For this we pray: **R/.**

May your Holy Spirit guide our hearts and our lips, so that we may remain constant in our love and praise for you. For this we pray: **R/.**

Blessing

With hands outstretched, the celebrant prays the blessing for the catechists.

CELEBRANT:

With your fatherly blessing, Lord, strengthen these servants of yours in their resolve to dedicate themselves as catechists. Grant that they will strive to share with others what they themselves derive from pondering your Word and studying the Church's teaching. And let them gladly join those they teach in honoring and serving your name.

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or

CELEBRANT:

Lord God, source of all wisdom and knowledge, you sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to live among us and to proclaim his message of faith, hope, and love to all nations. In your goodness, bless our brothers and sisters who have offered themselves as catechists for your Church. Strengthen them with your gifts that they may teach by word and by example the truth that comes from you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **R/. Amen.**

Concluding Rite

The ritual concludes with the celebrant offering the final prayer.

CELEBRANT:

In Christ, God has revealed his love and his truth. May he make you witnesses to the Gospel and to the divine love. **R/. Amen.**

The Lord Jesus promised to be with his Church until the end of the world. May he give power to your actions and your words. **R/. Amen.**

May the Spirit of the Lord be with you, so that you may help the ministers of his Word. **R/. Amen.**

And may almighty God bless us all, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **R/. Amen.**