

CHAPTER III

BLESSINGS OF PERSONS

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BLESSING OF AN EXPECTANT MOTHER

at the approach of confinement

In the Middle Ages it was customary for a pastor to announce from the pulpit on Sundays the names of women whose time of childbirth was close at hand, and to ask the people's prayers for them. But his solicitude did not stop there. He also visited the homes of such women, first said prayers outside the home, and then entered and administered the sacraments and the sacramentals of the Church. Without going quite to these lengths today, an occasional word of instruction about this very fine blessing would encourage some women to present themselves for it.

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

P: Save your servant.

All: Who trusts in you, my God.

P: Let her find in you, Lord, a tower of strength.

All: In the face of the enemy.

P: Let the enemy have no power over her.

All: And the son of iniquity be powerless to harm her.

P: Lord, send her aid from your holy place.

All: And watch over her from Sion.

P: Lord, heed my prayer.

All: And let my cry be heard by you.

P: The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

P: Lord, heed my prayer.

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P: The Lord be with you.

All: May He also be with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty everlasting God, who by means of the blessed Virgin Mary's childbearing has given every Christian mother joy, even in her pains of bringing forth her child; look kindly on this servant of yours who has come in gladness to your holy dwelling to offer her thanks. And grant that after this life, through the merits and prayers of that same blessed Mary, she and her child may be deemed worthy of attaining the happiness of everlasting life; through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Collectio Rituum, both for Germany and the U. S. A., provide the following blessing for the child:

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, begotten before time was, yet willing to be an infant within time; who love childhood innocence; who deigned to tenderly embrace and to bless the little ones when they were brought to you; be ready with your dearest blessings for this child as he (she) journeys through life, and let no evil ways corrupt his (her) understanding. May he (she) advance in wisdom and grace with the years, and be enabled ever to please you, who are God, living and reigning with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever.

All: Amen.

4. The priest again sprinkles her with holy water, saying:

May the peace and blessing of almighty God, Father, Son, ✠ and Holy Spirit, come upon you and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.

5. The blessing of a woman after childbirth ought to be given by the pastor, if he is requested to do so. But any priest may impart it in any church or public oratory, in which case he should notify the superior.