

Family Blessings for the Season of Advent

Blessing of an Advent Wreath

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All reply:

Who made heaven and earth.

One of those present reads the following Scripture text from Isaiah 9:1-2, 5-6

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the first letter of the prophet Isaiah:

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.

You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing,

As they rejoice before you as at the harvest,

as men make merry when dividing spoils.

For a child is born to us, a son is given us;

upon his shoulder dominion rests.

They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero,

Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.

His dominion is vast and forever peaceful,

From David's throne, and over his kingdom,

which he confirms and sustains by judgement and justice,

both now and forever.

A priest or deacons then says the following prayer of blessing with hands outstretched; if the service is led by a lay minister (i.e. father or mother), he or she says the prayer with hands joined and does not make the sign of the cross.

Lord God,

your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior, who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin. Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath; may their light reflect the splendor of Christ, who is Lord, for ever and ever.

All reply: Amen.

This blessing of an Advent Wreath is taken from The Book of Blessings, chapter 47.

Blessing of Manger or Nativity Scene (Shorter Rite)

**This rite is especially appropriate for use when the blessing takes place in the home and is given by a family member.*

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All reply:

Who made heaven and earth.

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

Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke: 2:1-8
The birth of Jesus. In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock.

(Or Isaiah 7:10-15 — The birth of Emmanuel)

A minister who is a priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing with hands outstretched; a lay minister (i.e. father or mother) says the prayer with hands joined.

God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Savior was great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger, may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise up our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All reply: Amen.

This blessing of a Manger or Nativity Scene is taken from The Book of Blessings.