

**ST. BRIDGET CHURCH**  
**PO BOX 408**  
**107 Main Street**  
**Hobart, Indiana 46342-0408**  
**(219) 942 – 6441**  
**Fax # (219) 942-4573**  
**Office Hours M-F 8-12 / 1-4**  
**[www.stbridgethobart.org](http://www.stbridgethobart.org)**

Pastor Rev. Dominic V. Bertino

Pastoral Associate

Mrs. Tyra Serrano-Galarza (219) 942 – 6441 x121  
Email: [dre@stbridgethobart.org](mailto:dre@stbridgethobart.org)

Parish/School Secretary

Mrs. Darlene Williams (219) 942- 6441 x109  
Email: [dwilliams@stbridgethobart.org](mailto:dwilliams@stbridgethobart.org)

Bookkeeper

Mrs. Cheryl Balzer (219) 942-6441 x109 or 110  
Email: [cbalzer@stbridgethobart.org](mailto:cbalzer@stbridgethobart.org)

Music Ministry

Mrs. Brenda Bondi  
Email: [stbridgetmusic@gmail.com](mailto:stbridgetmusic@gmail.com)

### **General Parish Office Information**

The Parish Office should be contacted during regular working hours for most Parish business. This includes making an appointment with the secretary to see the Pastor, requesting rental and scheduling information regarding the Parish Hall and requesting sacramental records. Please allow adequate and reasonable time when requesting sacramental records.

Open communication in the spirit of Christian charity regarding the needs and affairs of the Parish is encouraged. Unfortunately, our experience is that anonymous mail and telephone calls to the Parish Office tend not to be in the spirit of Christian charity. Accordingly, anonymous telephone calls are generally not accepted. Anonymous mail is discarded unread. Please

make sure to provide your return name and address when writing to the Parish Office or the Pastor. Mail, with a return address, may be placed in the collection basket and will be delivered to the Parish Office.

### **PREFACE**

St. Bridget Church is a Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Gary, Indiana. This handbook is designed to answer common questions about the administration of the sacraments, help both the new and established parishioner understand the structure of the Parish, and present the many opportunities to share in the life of the Parish.

### **PARISH MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Persons who wish to be members of the Parish must register with the Parish office during regular business hours. The practice of our Christian faith, as expressed in the Parish, brings the privileges and blessings of Parish membership together with the duty to participate in Parish life.

The privileges and blessings of membership include those certain functions which are entrusted to the pastor. The more common of these are the celebration of the Mass and the Eucharist, the administration of Baptism, the Anointing of the Sick and administration of the Eucharist to the ill, the witnessing of marriages, the celebration of funerals and the imparting of solemn blessings both inside and outside the church.

Members of the Parish receive the blessings of Parish life through their active participation in the Parish in many ways. First, and foremost, is regular and frequent attendance at Mass and participation in the sacraments. Second, there are many lay councils and ministries open to Parish members, which are described in this handbook. Finally, each Parish member should practice stewardship toward the Parish according to his or her ability. Parents of children are reminded of their grave obligation to educate their children in the faith through the Religious Education Programs provided by the Parish.

### **MASS**

Mass is celebrated in the Parish School Chapel or Church each weekday. Mass is offered in the Church on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday morning. The following are the Holy Days of Obligation in the United States:

Immaculate Conception December 8

Christmas	December 25
The Mother of God	January 1
Ascension Thursday	Forty days after Easter
Assumption	August 15
All Saints Day	November 1

The holy days of The Mother of God, the Assumption, and All Saints Day are not days of obligation in those years when they fall on a Saturday or Monday.

***Entering the Church***

The sign of the cross is made when entering Church to remind us of our baptismal promises. The sign of the cross should be made with the right hand with Holy Water when entering Church. Reverence should be made to the altar when crossing the front of the Church and when entering the pews by genuflecting on the right knee and making the sign of the cross with the right hand.

***Late Arrival***

Please make every effort to be on time for Mass. Once Mass has started, please seat yourself only before or after a prayer or a reading or as otherwise directed by an usher. It is inappropriate to stand in the back of Church when seating is available.

***Courtesy in Church***

Conduct at Mass should always reflect the realization that through the Holy Eucharist we are in the presence of the living God.

Shorts or tank tops should not be worn by either men or woman. Skirts should be a modest length. Food, drink or noisy toys should not be brought into the Church. Infant's bottles are welcome.

Parents are expected to teach their children appropriate behavior. Infants are welcome at Mass. Parents need not remove an infant from Mass at the first cry but should use common sense to decide when the sound becomes disruptive.

Bathroom facilities should be used before and after Mass whenever possible.

***Leaving the Church***

Mass is over when the priest leaves the altar. It is a common courtesy not to leave before the priest. Upon leaving the pew, the altar should be revered by genuflecting on the right knee and making the sign of the

cross with the right hand. Upon leaving the Church, the sign of the cross should be made with the right hand and holy water.

***Mass Intentions***

Although we pray for all living and deceased souls at each Mass, it is common practice for parishioners to request a special prayer be made at one or more Masses for a specific soul or purpose. These commonly include intentions for a deceased loved one, for relief from illness, for the well-being of a living person, for commemoration of a special event such as a wedding, anniversary, birthday or for thanks and praise to God for a blessing received.

Because of the great demand for Mass intentions, requests should be made at least six months in advance if the intention is for a specific date. Requests can be made in person at the parish office or placed in the collection basket at Mass.

It is customary, but not required, that the request for a Mass intention be accompanied by an offering, called a stipend. The stipend for a Mass intention is an offering, like the offering at Mass. Whether the stipend is made, or the amount of the stipend, is a matter of conscience on the part of the person requesting the intention. For reference only, in the Diocese of Gary it is customary to offer a stipend of at least five dollars.

**SACRAMENTS**

**Baptism** Baptism is that sacrament which frees us from original sin and incorporates us into Christ. Any person not already baptized can receive Baptism if that person has the desire to be baptized. Adults not already baptized are usually baptized as part of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA).

Parents who desire to have their children baptized must be members of the Parish. First time parents or parents baptizing their children for the first time must also complete a program of preparation. Baptism preparation for parents may also be required before the baptism of additional children at the pastor's discretion.

Baptism preparation for parents is offered upon request. Please contact the parish office to register and to receive the preparation schedule. Since infants are usually baptized shortly after birth, first time parents are strongly encouraged to attend the Baptism preparation prior to the birth of the child before the need for sleep and/or a babysitter are issues.

All persons being baptized must have at least one sponsor. Sponsors are limited to no more than one person of each sex, must be at least sixteen years old, must be practicing Catholics who have been confirmed and, if married, must be married within the Roman Catholic Church.

Parents are reminded that Baptism of a child places a grave responsibility on the parents to educate that child in the faith. Education in the faith must first begin in the daily life at home. Formal religious education is also necessary before the subsequent sacraments can be received and is available through the School of Religious Education.

**Reconciliation** Reconciliation is that sacrament by which absolution from sins and reconciliation to the Church may be obtained by acknowledging those sins and resolving to commit them no more.

All members of the Church are obligated at least once a year to make a diligent examination of conscience and confess all serious sins committed after Baptism which have not been previously confessed and forgiven. Confessions are heard weekly or can be heard by appointment. Please call the Parish office for the regular schedule or to make an appointment.

First Confession for children is usually made in the second grade year. The preparation for the celebration of the sacrament includes orientation meetings for parents of those children who are to make their First Confession.

**Eucharist** The Eucharist is that sacrament by which we partake of bread and wine which, through the invocation of the Holy Spirit, has become the body and blood of Christ. All who are eligible are encouraged to receive the Eucharist frequently.

#### ***Guidelines for Receiving***

Out of respect to the Eucharist, those who are to receive Communion must abstain from food or drink for at least one hour prior to Mass, with the exceptions of water or medicine. Those who are elderly or infirm are exempt from this requirement. A person who is conscious of grave sin should not receive Communion without prior sacramental confession except in unusual cases. All the faithful are bound by the obligation to receive Communion at least once a year during the Easter season.

Our manner of receiving the Eucharist should reflect our attitude of respect and reverence. While it is customary to receive the Eucharist only once on

a given day, exceptions are made, however, for those attending funeral or wedding Masses.

#### ***First Communion for Children***

Children receive Communion after they have acquired the knowledge and preparation to receive the Eucharist with faith and devotion. First Communion is customarily offered in the third grade year. Like First Confession, preparation includes orientation meetings with the parents of those children who are to receive First Communion. There will also be a meeting/test with the DRE and the child must attend mass regularly.

#### ***First Communion for Adults***

Adults who have not previously received Communion usually make their first Communion after completing a process of education in the faith through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). The adult must first be baptized; if this has not already been done, make a Confession through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Confirmation** Confirmation is that sacrament which strengthens in us the grace of Baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Every baptized person can and should receive Confirmation. In the ordinary course of events Confirmation is administered after the age of discretion has been reached. Baptized adults are usually confirmed as part of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA).

It is a parent's duty to ensure that children are educated in the faith and confirmed. Preparation for Confirmation of children is made through the School of Religious Education.

Preparation for the Confirmation of children also includes parental orientation meetings.

**Anointing of the Sick** The Anointing of the Sick is a special sacrament and blessing which is reserved for the seriously or chronically ill. The sacrament may be administered more than once as illness presents itself. The sacrament is also administered prior to surgery or to the elderly who have become infirm.

Parishioners should inform the Parish Office in a reasonable time before a planned hospital admission so that a priest may be available to administer the sacrament, if appropriate. The Parish Office should be contacted at

once in the event of grave illness so that arrangements can be made to both anoint the sick as well as hear Confessions.

**Marriage** Marriage is that sacrament and covenant by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership for the whole of life. The preparation for marriage reflects the depth and seriousness of the act of making a life-long covenant to another person.

Couples desiring to marry must contact the Pastor in person *at least six months* prior to their desired wedding date in order to have adequate time for marriage preparation. Marriage preparation includes a series of meetings with the pastor as well as with a team of married couples and an evaluation of the couple's common values and communication styles.

Please contact the Parish office for specific guidelines for the use of the Church, the form of the wedding Mass or liturgy and the arrangement of music.

Weddings celebrated on Saturdays are scheduled at 11:00 am or 1:30 pm. Weddings celebrated during the week are scheduled in the late afternoon or early evening. Weddings are not celebrated on Sundays or during the seasons of Lent or Advent.

To avoid scheduling conflicts, please consult the Pastor **before** setting the wedding date.

**Divorce and Annulment** Although marriage in Christ is intended to be a partnership for the whole of life, divorce among Catholics is a sad reality. Because Catholic marriage is binding for life, absent an annulment of that marriage granted by the Church, civil divorce has no effect upon the rights and obligations of the parties in the eyes of the Church. Divorced individuals may fully participate in the life of the Church and receive the Sacraments *so long as that individual has not re-married outside the Church*. Consummation of a second marriage, without benefit of an annulment of the prior marriage, constitutes adultery, a mortal sin which excludes the individual from receiving Communion.

An annulment proceeding is an examination of a marriage at its inception to ascertain if the requirements for a valid Catholic marriage were met. The granting of an annulment is a finding that the original marriage was not valid at its inception. Applications for annulments are made through the Diocese with the Tribunal Office, which may be contacted at 9292 S. Broadway, Merrillville, Indiana 46410, (219) 769 - 9292. Divorced persons

planning to remarry within the Church should be aware that the process for the granting of an annulment may take a year or more to complete.

### **FUNERAL LITURGIES**

A funeral liturgy is available for anyone who has been baptized. A funeral liturgy is also available for an infant who has died too soon after birth for a reasonable opportunity for Baptism. Funeral *Masses*, however, may not be celebrated on a Sunday, an observed Holy Day of Obligation or Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week.

While the need for a funeral liturgy or Mass is often un-anticipated, please contact the Parish Office as soon as the need has arisen to insure that a priest or the Church will be available.

### **LAY MINISTRIES within MASS**

All Parish members are welcome to participate in the celebration of the Mass through lay ministries.

These lay ministries include acolytes, cantors, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, lectors, hospitality ministers, choirs and singing groups.

Persons in lay ministries are welcome to contact the parish office to participate at any time.

### **LAY MINISTRIES outside of MASS**

There are even more opportunities to participate in the life of the Parish in a lay ministry outside of Mass. The Parish always has a need for instructors - whether for Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults to help bring adults into the faith, or for the School of Religious Education to teach and prepare children for the sacraments; for married couples to participate in marriage preparation, or for adults to lead the separate Liturgy of the Word for children during Mass.

There are places and tasks for all who feel a call to a lay ministry according to their time and talents. Please contact the Parish Office if you would like to participate.

## PARISH DEVOTIONS

In addition to receiving the sacraments and attending Mass, Parishioners worship and receive blessings through the Parish devotional activities. These include:

- ❖ Recitation of the Rosary every Sunday after the 11:00 Mass
- ❖ Annual Day of Reflection in the spring
- ❖ Vespers and Stations of the Cross during Lent
- ❖ Candles blessed on Candlemas Day, February 2
- ❖ The Blessing of Throats on the Feast of St. Blase, February 3

Please consult the weekly bulletin or call the Parish Office for the latest schedule. Special blessings for persons, intentions or objects are also available by arrangement with the pastor.

## EDUCATION IN THE FAITH

Canon Law is unequivocal about the duties of parents to have their children educated in the faith.

Because they have given life to their children, parents have a most serious obligation and enjoy the right to educate them; therefore Christian parents are especially to care for the Christian education of their children according to the teaching handed on by the Church.  
*Canon 226, § 2.*

While that education must have its base in the home, formal education of children in the faith is available through the School of Religious Education which serves children from first grade through high school.

Catholic high school education is available locally through Andrean High School at 5959 Broadway, Merrillville, (219) 887 - 5281 or Bishop Noll Institute at 1510 White Oak, Hammond, (219) 932 - 9058.

The parish sponsors a scouting program for boys. The parish office can provide information on the scouting program.

## School of Religious Education

Education in the faith for children is available through the School of Religious Education. Several programs are available. Please contact the Parish office for the current schedule.

### Bible Study

The parish offers on-going Scripture study. Please contact the parish office for the current schedule.

### Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

Education in the faith for non-Catholic adults is available through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, RCIA. The Rite is concerned with the total formation of the person into believing with the Church community (doctrinal formation), living with the church community (practical formation), and serving with the Church community (apostolic formation).

Persons who are baptized in another faith or who are baptized Catholic but not instructed in the faith follow a course of catechesis as needed. The unbaptized follow a process to conversion by experiencing journeying in the faith through formation in doctrine, liturgy, apostolic work, and Christian living. These periods of formation are linked by three liturgical stages with ritualize the conversion process.

The Rite of Acceptance to the catechumenate is the first step for entering the Church. This is held on the First Sunday of Advent. Catechumens (the unbaptized) continue their conversion by meeting weekly on Sunday.

The Rite of Election is the second step, which marks the transition from deepening of faith to consecration in the faith through a formal statement of intent by the catechumens, now called the Elect. This is held the First Sunday of Lent at Holy Angels Cathedral.

The period of Enlightenment or Purification takes place during Lent. This is marked by intense prayer, presentations, and catechesis, in anticipation of reception of the initiation sacraments at the celebration of Mass at the Easter Vigil.

The final period of formation is Mystagogia, which is carried out from Easter Sunday through the summer months as the mysteries of Christ's

Death and Resurrection are revealed and lived as on-going formation for the newly Baptized.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE PARISH**

While it is true that the kingdom of God runs on faith, at St. Bridget Church that faith is reflected in the many people who contribute time, money and energy to support and to run the organizations necessary for the Parish to function.

### **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**Church Support** Envelopes for contributions for the financial support of the Parish are printed yearly and mailed. This system facilitates recording of all donations, keeps the census lists up-to-date and provides a weekly reminder of the Parish's need for financial support. The weekly bulletin distributed at Mass contains the contribution information for the previous week. Individual donation reports for the calendar year are mailed to Parishioners upon request.

**Special Collections** Throughout the year there are Sundays when a second collection is taken, for special needs of the Parish or for a cause outside the Parish or the Diocese. There is a second collection the first Sunday of the month for Parish Capital Improvements. Envelopes for this second collection are included in the annual envelope packages.

A second collection is also taken for an annual mission appeal. By our contribution we reflect the depth of both our faith and our communion with our brothers and sisters in need.

**Parish Bulletin** A weekly Parish bulletin is distributed after each weekend Mass. Material to be included in the bulletin for a specific Sunday must be in the Parish office by noon on the Monday prior to the Sunday publication date. All material is subject to editing and to approval by the pastor. The bulletin can also be viewed online at [www.DiscoverMass.com](http://www.DiscoverMass.com).

**Parish Records** Church law, and in some cases civil law, requires that the Parish maintain records of registration, sacraments including marriage, death and church support. While official, these records are confidential.

Requests for information or sacramental certificates must be made in person or in writing. Requests for a child's records must be made by a parent or guardian. When requesting records, please provide the name of the individual and the approximate date of the sacrament or event.

## **COUNCILS AND COMMITTEES**

The *Parish Finance Council* consists of eight members, four elected and four appointed, who serve for two years. The Parish Council advises the pastor with regard to the material needs of the Parish. The Parish Council meets quarterly and has sub-committees such as Budget, Contracts, Buildings and Ways & Means.

The *Pastoral Council* meets monthly, except for June, July and August. The Pastoral Council collaborates with the pastor in matters of spiritual life, religious education and lay apostolate.

## **CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS**

**St. Anne Confraternity of Christian Mothers** This is an organization of Christian women who have joined together to promote the Christian education of children, to promote Christian living and service to St. Bridget Parish, to foster the spiritual development of women in the parish, and to provide opportunities for friendship and community spirit through social and educational programs. Meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 1:15 PM.

Contact Mrs. Mary Anne Shaw at (219) 942-6441

**St. Vincent de Paul Society** The Parish and conference of St. Vincent de Paul offers silent works of charity by quietly and discretely aiding needy families, personally visiting homes, hospitals and institutions, seeking and serving the distressed and by growing spiritually through a gift of self to others. It meets on the first Tuesday of each month.

Contact Mrs. Barb Bland at (219) 942-6067

**Peace and Social Justice Committee** This Parish organization seeks to increase the knowledge of, and commitment to, the social teachings of the Church as expressed in Scripture, papal encyclicals and pastoral letters through speakers, workshops and flyers and to encourage Catholic involvement in political and social issues.

**The Youth Council of the St. Vincent de Paul Society** This youth group reaches out by assisting those in need. Events or activities are selected to either promote Christian spiritual development or provide an alternative to popular entertainment.

Contact Jennifer and Jason Solivais at (219) 942-6441

**Knights of Columbus Round Table** This is a fraternal and social organization of Catholic men who encourage fellowship among members and families. Members perform works of charity, education and patriotism for the benefit of the community and the nation while building faith and serving the needs of the Parish.

Contact Mr. Rich Rajski at (219) 942-6441

### **PARISH CHARITIES**

The Parish lends its endorsement to certain local charities.

**The Hobart Food Pantry** The mission of the Hobart Food Pantry is to provide food at no cost, in a caring and respectful manner, to people in need from our community, while preserving their dignity. The environment of the Pantry will encourage the community volunteers to serve with empathy and compassion. The Pantry is an all-volunteer organization established in 1982 that helps an average of 140 local families each week, more during the holiday season. For more information please see their website at [www.hobartfoodpantry.org](http://www.hobartfoodpantry.org).

The Pantry is located at 200 S. Hobart Road, Hobart and may be contacted by telephone at (219) 947-7779.

**The Answer for Pregnancy Aid, Inc.** The Answer is a Pro Life organization established in 1981 to provide information and support to parents and mothers-to-be. Their staff is trained and dedicated to helping parents and their babies. They confidentially help women make decisions about their future. In addition, professionals from various fields are available when necessary for consultations and referrals. More information can be found on their website at [www.answerforpregnancy.com](http://www.answerforpregnancy.com).

The Answer is located at 705 Colonial Drive, Hobart and may be contacted by telephone at (219) 947-2272.

### **ST BRIDGET PRE-SCHOOL**

St. Bridget's preschool program provides the young child the means to learn and grow in a positive Christian atmosphere. It is designed to meet the needs and interests of the child, allowing for the opportunity to grow spiritually, socially, intellectually, emotionally, and physically. There are several different program options.

For enrollment information, please call the parish office at 219-942-6441 Ext 131. We are happy to answer your questions.

### **PARISH SOCIAL EVENTS**

**Annual Lenten Fish Fry** Each Lent St. Bridget Church provides the opportunity for the Parish to share our Lenten sacrifices together at an annual fish fry dinner. This is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

**Feast of the dedication of St. Bridget Church** On June 27 the Parish celebrates the dedication of St. Bridget Church by a mass followed by a pot luck dinner.

**Pancake Breakfast** Please join us the first Sunday of each month in the Parish Center. This is generously provided to you by the Stewardship Committee. Contact Bob Ray at (219) 942-6441

**Coffee and Donuts** Please join us in the Parish Center each Sunday (except the first Sunday of the month) after the 8:00 and 9:30 masses. Contact Marsha Plesac at (219) 781-8151

**Spiritual Garden Book Club** Please join us as we meet monthly to read, discuss, and enjoy the wonderful world of books! Please contact the parish office for the current schedule.

## PRAYERS AND BLESSINGS

As Catholics, we constantly seek to know and do the will of God. Accordingly, the Church's history and practice is filled with prayers and blessings invoked to focus our thoughts on God during life outside of Mass. Families are encouraged to foster common family prayers and rituals. Some of the more useful or common are presented below. Alternative prayers are indicated by boldface letters in the left margin. Directions are indicated in italics.

### Going Out From Home Each Day

- A** Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation: you guide my footsteps.  
Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation: you spread out the earth upon the waters.  
Direct our steps to yourself, O God, and show us how to walk in charity and peace.
- B** Praise the LORD from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights;  
Praise him, all you his angels,  
praise him, all you his hosts.  
Praise him, sun and moon;  
praise him, all you shining stars.  
Praise him, you highest heavens,  
and you waters above the heavens.  
Let them praise the name of the LORD,  
for he commanded and they were created;  
He established them forever and ever;  
he gave them a duty which shall not pass away.
- Praise the LORD from the earth,  
you sea monsters and all depths;  
Fire and hail, snow and mist,  
storm winds that fulfill his word;  
You mountains and all you hills,  
you fruit trees and all you cedars;  
You wild beasts and all tame animals,  
you creeping things and you winged fowl.  
Let the kings of earth and all peoples,  
the princes and all the judges of the earth,  
Young men too, and maidens, old men and boys,

Praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted;  
His majesty is above earth and heaven,  
and he has lifted up the horn of his people.  
Be this his praise from all his faithful ones, from the children of Israel, the people close to him. Alleluia.  
Psalm 148

- C** Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;  
let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation.  
Let us greet him with thanksgiving;  
let us joyfully sing psalms to him.  
For the LORD is a great God,  
and a great king above all gods;  
In his hands are the depths of the earth,  
and the tops of the mountains are his.  
His is the sea, for he has made it,  
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.  
Come, let us bow down in worship;  
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.  
For he is our God, and we are the people he shepherds, the flock he guides.  
Psalm 95: 1-7

### For the Day's Work at Home

God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;  
God be at my end, and at my departing.

### Coming Home Each Day

- A** Hear us, Lord, and send your angel from heaven to visit and protect, to comfort and defend all who live in this house.  
May the Lord of peace give us peace all the time and in every way. The Lord be with us.
- B** O radiant Light, O sun divine, of God the Father's deathless face,  
O Image of the light sublime that fills the heavenly dwelling place.  
Lord Jesus Christ, as daylight fades, as shine the lights of eventide, we praise the Father with the Son, The Spirit blest and with them one.

O Son of God, the source of life, praise is your due by night and day; our [untarnished] lips must raise the strain of your proclaimed and splendid name.

### At Table on Sunday

*(After first lighting a candle):*

**A** Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

R: A light no darkness can overpower.

*(Lifts the bread):* We thank you, Father, for the life and knowledge you have revealed to us through your child Jesus. Glory be yours through all ages. As grain once scattered on the hillside was in this broken bread made one, so from all lands may we be gathered into your kingdom by your Son.

**B** The Lord bless us and keep us.

R: Amen.

The Lord's face shine upon us and be gracious to us.

R: Amen.

The Lord look upon us with kindness and give us peace.

R: Amen.

All: Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise God above, ye heavenly host.

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

### Blessings on Birthdays

**A** God of all creation, we offer you grateful praise for the gift of life.

Hear the prayers of (*\*insert name\**), your servant, who recalls today the gift of his/her birth/baptism and rejoices in your gifts of life and love, family and friends.

Bless him/her with your presence and surround him/her with your love that he/she may enjoy many happy years, all of them pleasing to you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**B** The Lord said to Jeremiah:

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,  
Before you were born I dedicated you.

May God, in whose presence our ancestors walked, bless you.

R. Amen.

May God, who has been your shepherd from birth until now, keep you.

R. Amen

May God, who saves you from all harm, give you peace.

R. Amen.

**C** *For children:*

Loving God, you created all the people of the world, and you know each of us by name.

We thank you for (*\*insert name\**),

who celebrates his/her birthday.

Bless him/her with your love and friendship that he/she may grow in wisdom, knowledge, and grace.

May he/she love his/her family always and be ever faithful to her/his friends.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Blessings on the Anniversary of Baptism

**A** God of the covenant, you anointed your beloved Son with the power of the Holy Spirit, to be light for the nations and release for the captives.

May (*\*insert name\**), who has been born again of water and the Spirit, proclaim with his/her lips the good news of peace and manifest in his/her life the victory of justice.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**B** Remember this, (*\*insert name\**).

You have been washed in the saving waters of baptism and anointed with holy oil.

Place on your head and in your heart the sign of the cross of salvation.

*Those present may place their hands on the head or shoulders of the one being blessed.*

May God, in whose presence our ancestors walked, bless you.

R: Amen.

May God, who has been your shepherd from birth until now, keep you.

R: Amen

May God, who saves you from all harm, give you peace.

R: Amen.

### Blessing on A Name's Day

*On the feast for whom a child is named, the following blessing may be used. The life of the saint may also be related.*

O God of Glory,  
whom we name this child in many ways, when we brought this child before the Church we were asked, "What name do you give this child?"  
We answered, (*\*insert name\**), and so our child was claimed by Christ by that name.

May Saint (*\*insert name\**) ever pray for him/her, may he/she guard over him/her so that (*\*insert name\**) might overcome all evil and come at last to that place where his/her name is written in the book of life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

*R.* Amen.

### **The Universal Prayer of Pope Clement XI**

Lord, we believe in you: increase our faith. We trust in you: strengthen our trust. We love you: let us love more and more. We are sorry for our sins: deepen our sorrow. We worship you as our first beginning, we long for you as our last end, we praise you as our constant helper, and call on you as our loving protector.

Guide us by your wisdom, correct us with your justice, comfort us with your mercy, protect us with your power.

We offer you, Lord, our thoughts: to be fixed on you; our words: to have you for their theme; our actions: to reflect our love for you; our sufferings: to be endured for your greater glory.

We want to do what you ask of us: in the way you ask, for as long as you ask, because you ask it.

Lord, enlighten our understanding, strengthen our will, purify our hearts, and make us holy.

Help us to repent of our past sins and to resist temptation in the future.

Help us to rise above our human weaknesses and to grow stronger as Christians.

Let us love you, our Lord and our God, and see ourselves as we really are: pilgrims in this world, Christians called to respect and love all whose lives

we touch, those in authority over us or those under our authority, our friends and our enemies.

Help us to conquer anger with gentleness, greed by generosity, apathy by fervor. Help us to forget ourselves and reach out toward others.

Make us prudent in planning, courageous in taking risk. Make us patient in suffering, unassuming in prosperity.

Keep us, Lord, attentive at prayer, temperate in food and drink, diligent in our work, firm in our good intentions. Let our consciences be clear, our conduct without fault, our speech blameless, our lives well-ordered.

Put us on guard against our human weaknesses. Let us cherish your love for us, keep your law, and come at last to your salvation.

Teach us to realize that this world is passing, that our true future is the happiness of heaven, that life on earth is short, and the life to come eternal.

Help us to prepare for death with a proper fear of judgment, but a greater trust in your goodness. Lead us safely through death to the endless joy of heaven.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Prayer of Pope Leo XIII to St. Michael the Archangel**

Saint Michael the Archangel defend us in battle;

Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,

And do you, O prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God,

Thrust into hell Satan and all the evil spirits

Who prowl about the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

### **Blessing of an Advent Wreath**

*(After making the sign of the cross.*

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

*R:* Who made heaven and earth.

In the short days and long nights of Advent, we realize how we are always waiting for deliverance, always needing salvation by our God. Around this wreath, we shall remember God's promise.

*Then the scripture is read:*

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

The people who have walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
Upon those who have dwelt in the land of gloom  
a light has shone.  
You have brought them abundant joy  
And great rejoicing.

*(An alternative reading, such as Isaiah 63:16-17 or Isaiah 64:2-7 may be used)*

This is the Word of the Lord.

R: Thanks be to God.

*All join in prayers of intercession and in the Lord's Prayer.*

Let us now pray for God's blessing upon us and upon this wreath.  
*After a short silence, the leader prays:*

Lord our God,  
We praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:  
He is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,  
He is the wisdom that teaches and guides us,  
He is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God,  
let your blessing come upon us as we light this candles of this wreath.  
May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us  
salvation.  
May he come quickly and not delay.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord  
R. Amen

*The first candle is then lighted.*

Let us bless the Lord.

R: *(Making the sign of the cross):*

Thanks be to God.

*The blessing concludes with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":*

O come, desire of nations, bind  
In one the hearts of humankind;  
Bid ev'ry sad division cease  
And by thyself our Prince of peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

### **Blessing of the Christmas Tree**

**A** Blessed be the name of the Lord.

R: Now and forever.

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 ours hearts. We ask this through Christ our  
Lord.

R: Amen.

**B** *(After the tree has been prepared, all gather and make the sign of  
the cross.)*

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

R: Now and for ever.

This tree is a blessing to our home. It reminds us of all that is  
beautiful, all that is filled with the gentleness and the promise of  
God. It stands in our midst as a tree of light that we might promise  
such beauty to each other and to our world. It stands like that tree  
of paradise that God made into the tree of life, the cross of Jesus.

*Then the scripture is read:*

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul to Titus:

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. Titus 3:4-7

*(An alternate reading such as Psalm 96:11-13 may be used)*

This is the Word of the Lord.

R: Thanks be to God.

*(After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession and in  
the Lord's Prayer. )*

Let us now pray for God's blessing upon all who gather around  
this tree.

*(After a short silence):*

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 the blessing come upon us, as we illuminate 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.*

**C** God of all creation, we praise you for this tree, which brings beauty  
and memories and the promise of life to our home.

May your blessing be upon all who gather around this tree,  
all who keep the Christmas festival by its lights.

We wait for the coming of the Christ,  
the days of everlasting justice and of peace.

You are our God, living and reigning, for ever and ever.

*R. Amen.*

*The lights of the tree are then illuminated.*

Let us bless the Lord.

*R: (Making the sign of the cross):* Thanks be to God.

*The blessing concludes with a verse from "O Come, O Come,  
Emmanuel":*

O come, thou day spring, come and cheer

Our spirits by thine advent here;

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night

And death's dark shadow put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

Shall come to thee, O Israel.

**D** Blessed be the name of the Lord.

*R: Now and forever.*

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*

### **Blessing of a Christmas Crèche or Manger Scene**

*The manger scene has a special place near the Christmas tree or in  
another place where family members can reflect and pray during the  
Christmas season. It is blessed each year on Christmas Eve or Christmas  
Day.*

*(All make the sign of the cross.)*

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

*R: Who made heaven and earth.*

We are at the beginning of the days of Christmas. All through the  
season we will look on these images of sheep and cattle, of  
shapers, of Mary and of Joseph and Jesus.

*Then the Scripture is read:*

Listen to the words of the holy gospel according to Luke:

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.  
Luke 2:1-7

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

*R: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

*The figures may be placed in the manger. After a time of silence, all join  
in prayers of intercession and in the Lord's Prayer.*

Pray now for God's blessing as we look on these figures.

After a short silence, the leader prays:

**A** 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 our thoughts to him, who is God-

with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

R. Amen

**B** God of Mary and Joseph, of shepherds and animals, bless us whenever we gaze on this manger scene. Through all the days of Christmas, may these figures tell the story of how humans, angels, and animals found the Christ in this poor place.

Fill our house with hospitality, joy, gentleness, and thanksgiving and guide our steps in the way of peace.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

Let us bless the Lord.

R: *(Making the sign of the cross)*: Thanks be to God.

*Then Christmas songs and carols are sung.*

### **Passion Sunday: Placing of the Branches**

*The branches that are blessed and brought home on Passion (Palm) Sunday are placed near the cross and Scriptures. They remind us that Lent is the slow coming of spring to the earth, the renewal of life. They are like the great "Hosanna" with which we hail the crucified and risen Lord. After dinner or at another time on Palm Sunday, the household gathers where the palms have been placed with the cross and the Scriptures. All make the sign of the cross.*

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

R: Hosanna in the highest!

We have come to the last days of Lent. Today we heard the reading of the Passion. That story will remain with us as we leave Lent behind on Holy Thursday and enter into the Three Days when we celebrate the mystery of Christ passing through suffering and death to life at God's right hand.

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians:

We are always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being given up to death for the sake of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. Corinthians 4:10-11

This is the word of the Lord.

R: Thanks be to God.

*After a time of silence, members of the household join in prayers of intercession, or the Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus may be prayed and the Lord's Prayer.*

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, God of Israel, so rich in love and mercy.

Let these branches ever remind us of Christ's triumph.

May we who bear them rejoice in his cross and sing your praise for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

*Together all take the palms to the place where they will be kept through the coming year. Hymns may be sung to a tune such as "The Old Hundredth" (Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow) or "Erhalt Uns Herr" (The Glory of These Forty Days) while the palms are placed. After the palms are placed:*

Let us bless the Lord.

R: *(Making the sign of the cross)*: Thanks be to God.

### **Blessing of Easter Foods**

*After the fasting of Lent, and the Easter Fast from Thursday night until the Vigil, the foods of Easter have a special place. The following blessing prayer may be used with the table prayer for Easter before the meal that breaks the Easter Fast.*

God of Glory, the eyes of all turn to you as we celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death.

Bless *(making the sign of the cross)* us and this food of our first Easter meal.

May we who gather at the Lord's table, continue to celebrate the joy of his resurrection and be admitted finally to his heavenly banquet. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

### **All Saints and All Souls and November: Visiting A Grave**

*Some or all of the following may be used when visiting the grave of a family member or friend. The month of November, especially All Saints Day and All Souls Day, is a traditional time for visiting graves, as is the anniversary of death.*

*After making the sign of the cross.*

Praise be to God our Father, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

Blessed be God for ever.

R: Blessed be God for ever.

*One or more of the following Scripture texts may be read:*

We should know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven. 2 Corinthians 5:1

I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39

*After a time of silence, all join in prayers of intercession, or in one of the litanies or in the Lord's Prayer.*

Lord God, whose days are without end and whose mercies beyond counting, keep us mindful that life is short and the hour of death unknown. Let your spirit guide our days on earth in the ways of holiness and justice, that we may serve you in union with the whole Church, sure in faith, strong in hope, perfected in love.

And when our earthly journey is ended, lead us rejoicing into your kingdom, where you live for ever and ever. R. Amen

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

May they rest in peace.

R. Amen.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithfully departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

*All make the sign of the cross.*

May the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Amen.

### **Blessing for Times of Sickness**

*When a child is ill, parents and others may bless her/him. When the illness is more serious, the Parish priest should be asked to visit and join the family in prayer and perhaps in the anointing of the sick.*

*When the parents wish to give a simple blessing, they may place a hand on the child's head and say one of the following prayers:*

**A** God of Love, ever caring, ever strong,

stand by us in our time of need.

Watch over (*\*insert name\**), who is sick;

look after him/her in every danger,

and grant him/her your healing and peace.

We ask this through Jesus the Lord.

R. Amen.

**B** (*\*insert name\**), when you were baptized, you were marked with the cross of Jesus.

I (we) make this cross (*make the sign of the cross*) on your forehead and ask the Lord to bless you and restore you to health.

R. Amen.

**C** May the Lord Jesus watch over you and keep you in peace.

R. Amen.

### **Order for Visiting a Cemetery**

[The following ritual is to be used when visiting a cemetery on All Soul's Day.]

Praise be to God our Father, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

Blessed be God forever.

R: Blessed be God forever.

We gather today to pray for our loved ones whose bodies lie here in rest.

They have passed from death to life in company with the Lord Jesus, who died and rose to new life, and are purified now of their faults. We pray that

God may welcome them among all the saints of heaven. Let us listen to the words of the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians. [Read aloud 1

*Thessalonians 4:13 - 18.*]

[Litany of the Saints]

Leader:

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Holy Mary, Mother of God:

St. Michael:

St. John the Baptist:

St. Joseph:

St. Peter:

St. Paul:

St. Andrew:

Response:

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Pray for them.

St. Stephen:	Pray for them.
St. Ann:	Pray for them.
St. Teresa:	Pray for them.
St. Catherine:	Pray for them.
St. Francis Cabrini:	Pray for them.
St. Elizabeth Seton:	Pray for them.
St. Bridget:	Pray for them.
All Holy Men and Women:	Pray for them.
Pardon all the faults.	Lord, hear our prayer.
Remember the good they have done.	Lord hear our prayer.
Receive them into eternal life.	Lord hear our prayer.
Comfort all those who mourn.	Lord hear our prayer.
Lord have mercy.	Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.	Christ have mercy.
Lord have mercy.	Lord have mercy.

With Christ there is mercy and fullness of redemption; Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

R: (Lord's Prayer)

All powerful God, whose mercy is never withheld from those who call upon you in hope, look kindly on your servants (*\*insert names\**), who departed this life confessing your name and number them among your saints for evermore. We ask you this through Christ our Lord.

R: Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

R: And let perpetual light shine upon them.

May they rest in peace.

R: Amen.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R: Amen.

### **Prayers at the Graveside**

*During the time of mourning, the following prayers may be recited at the graveside.*

**A** Lord Jesus Christ, by your own three days in the tomb, you hallowed the graves of all who believed in you, and so made the grave a sign of hope that promises resurrection even as it claims our mortal bodies.

Grant that our brother/sister, (*\*insert name\**), may sleep here in peace until you awaken her/him to glory, for you are the resurrection and the life.

Then he/she will see you face to face and in your light will see light and know the splendor of God, for you live and reign forever and ever.

R. Amen.

**B** O God,  
by whose mercy the faithful departed find rest,  
send your holy angel to watch over this grave.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
R. Amen.