

# ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF PARENTS BEFORE CHILDBIRTH

## Introduction

**215** A husband and wife participate in God's love through the sacrament of marriage and cooperate in the gift of life through the conception of a child. It is appropriate that they receive God's blessing together as they wait in faith and hope for the birth of their child.

When only the mother is present, the *Order for the Blessing of a Mother before Childbirth*, nos. 240-252, is used.

**216** The blessing may be celebrated at any time during the pregnancy.

**217** These orders may be used by a priest or a deacon, and also by a layperson, who follows the rites and prayers designated for a lay minister, or a family member.

## Shorter Rite

**232** All make the sign of the cross as the minister says:

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

All reply: Now and for ever.

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

**Brothers and sisters, listen to the words of the first book of Samuel:** 1:19-20, 24-2:1 *The birth of Samuel*.

Early the next morning Elkanah and Hannah worshiped before the Lord, and then returned to their home in Ramah. When Elkanah had relations with his wife Hannah, the Lord remembered her. She conceived, and at the end of her term bore a son whom she called Samuel, since she had asked the Lord for him.

Once he was weaned, she brought him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and presented him at the temple of the Lord in Shiloh. After the boy's father had sacrificed the young bull, Hannah, his mother, approached Eli and said: "Pardon, my lord" As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood near you here, praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child, and the Lord granted my request. Now I, in turn, give him to the Lord: as long as he lives, he shall be dedicated to the Lord."

She left him there; and as she worshiped the Lord, she said:

"My heart exults in the Lord,  
my horn is exalted in my God.  
I have swallowed up my enemies;  
I rejoice in my victory."

**234** Or:

Luke 1:39-45 -- *The baby leapt in my womb for joy.*

Luke 1:26-38 -- *You shall conceive and bear a son.*

Luke 2:1-14 -- *She gave birth to her firstborn son.*

**235** A minister who is a priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing, with hands outstretched over the parents; a lay minister says the prayer with hands joined.

**Gracious Father,**  
**your Word, spoken in love, created the human family**  
**and, in the fullness of time,**  
**your son, conceived in love, restored it to your friendship.**

**Hear the prayers of N. and N.,**  
**Who await the birth of their child.**  
**Calm their fears when they are anxious.**  
**Watch over and support these parents**  
**and bring their child into this world**  
**safely and in good health,**  
**so that as members of your family**  
**they may praise you and glorify you**  
**through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,**  
**now and for ever.**

**R: Amen.**

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