



Order of Blessing for Those Participating in *Seven Days of Service*

Suggested use date: Sunday, September 22, 2019 (25th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

INTRODUCTION

1. When the celebration of this blessing is joined with the celebration of Mass, the Introductory Rites and the Liturgy of the Word are carried out according to the rubrics.
2. After the gospel reading, the homilist may wish to incorporate the relationship that exists between our Eucharistic praxis and the praxis of charity offered to people in need, underscoring the importance of the Eucharist as a source of social transformation. Themes may include the following:
 - a. The Eucharist is the foundation for the communion of all humanity in its social, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Where individualist values seem to rule society, the Eucharist calls us to share with the Christian community. The Eucharist forges a theology of charity and love – a love that is both sacramental and prophetic, social and ethical.
 - b. It is impossible for us as Catholics to celebrate the Eucharist without an awareness of being part of a system that is not only economic and political, but also cultural and religious. It is a system of values and beliefs, choices and behaviors, judgments and decisions that has for centuries created poverty and oppression in the world and robbed people not only of bread, but of justice, integrity and dignity.
 - c. The gospel of the dishonest steward (25th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C; Luke 16:1-13) clearly outlines that we can only be devoted to one master – God. This means that there can be no split between our spiritual/religious lives (e.g. going to Mass, adoring the Blessed Sacrament, praying a rosary) and our daily living. To profess our faith and to serve God, then, is a way of life. It is service to those who are poor or who live in the peripheries of society.

PRAYER OF BLESSING

3. After the homily, those who will participate in any way in *Seven Days of Service* are invited to stand, using these or similar words:

In celebration of the 175th Anniversary of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and our commitment as Catholics to justice and mercy, people will be taking part in service opportunities throughout the archdiocese during this upcoming week. I invite anyone here who is planning on participating in this special effort, entitled *Seven Days of Service*, to please stand for a blessing.

- 4. The presider, with hands outstretched over the group, prays a prayer of blessing, in these or similar words:**

**We bless you, O God, and we praise your name.
In your merciful providence, you sent your Son into the world
to free us from the bondage of sin by his own blood
and to enrich us with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.**

**Before he returned to you, Father, triumphant over death,
he sent his apostles, the bearers of his love and power,
to proclaim the Gospel of life to all peoples
and in the waters of baptism to cleanse those who believe.**

**Lord, look kindly on these your servants,
whom we send forth today
as messengers of mercy and justice, salvation and peace.
Strengthened by the Eucharist, the source of mercy,
guide their steps with your mighty arm
and with the power of your grace, strengthen them in spirit.**

**May their words be an echo of Christ's words of truth,
so that those who hear them may be drawn to follow the way of the Gospel.
May their actions mirror those of Christ's actions of love,
so that those who see them may be transformed into his image.**

**Fill the hearts of these servants with the Holy Spirit,
so that, through their merciful works of charity and love,
they may lead others to you, the Father of all,
and to sing your praises in your holy Church.**

**We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.**

Amen.

(adapted from *Book of Blessings*; © 1987, ICEL)

- 5. As circumstances suggest, a suitable acclamation may be sung.**

UNIVERSAL PRAYER

6. The Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) follows, with one, or more, of the following intentions included:

For the Church of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee during this 175th Anniversary year: that, renewed in holiness and strengthened by the Eucharist, we may be the signs and instruments of your truth, justice and peace, we pray...

For those participating in *Seven Days of Service*: that in their words and actions, they may proclaim the Gospel of Christ in fresh words and daring new deeds, we pray...

For all those who live in the peripheries of society...those who are poor and homeless...those displaced by violence and...those challenged with addiction and mental illness...and those enslaved in human trafficking: that they may experience the abundant compassion of Christ in their trials and so be sustained in hope, we pray...

7. Mass continues in the usual way with the Liturgy of the Eucharist.