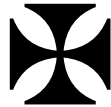


# Order for the Blessing of Pilgrims

*from the Book of Blessing*



*“For God will command His angels  
to guard you in all your ways”*

Psalm 91:11

DIOCESE OF METUCHEN PILGRIMAGE TO THE  
BASILICA OF THE NATIONAL SHRINE  
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION  
WASHINGTON, DC

BB 590 Whether in a traditional or a modern form, a pilgrimage to a holy place, to the tomb of a saint, or to a shrine should be regarded as having pastoral value. Pilgrimages are occasions for conversion, spiritual growth, and the advance of the apostolate.

BB 591 The proper, that is, spiritual, character of the Christian pilgrimage must be carefully explained and inculcated ahead of time, so that the pilgrims will truly be “traveling heralds of Christ” and will experience fully the good effects of their pilgrimage.

BB 592 For such pastoral purposes it will often be useful to arrange a special celebration for the blessing of the pilgrims at their departure or on their return.

BB 593 When, instead, the celebration of Mass, the liturgy of the hours, or some other liturgical service is preferred as the beginning or end of a pilgrimage, the celebration may be concluded with a blessing of the pilgrims taken from the orders in this chapter.

BB 594 The present order may be used by a priest or deacon. While maintaining the structure and chief elements of the rite, the minister should adapt the celebration to the circumstances of the place and the people involved.

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**Note from the Diocesan Office of Divine Worship:**

**For the Parishes organizing a Parish Bus:**

We encourage the Parish (where the Bus will be stationed for departure) to start the pilgrimage in prayer by inviting the pilgrims into the church and spending a few minutes in prayer before they get on the bus. If there is not enough time to go into the church, then either have the people gather before the entrance doors of the church or simply pray as soon as possible after departure on the bus.

A priest participating in the pilgrimage can serve as the Presider; otherwise, a deacon may serve as the presider if there is no priest available. If there is no clergy member participating in the pilgrimage, you may use the *Order for the Blessing of Travelers* as an alternative.

For the *Order of Blessing Before or After Their Return* (page 6), you may conclude the pilgrimage in prayer by inviting the pilgrims into the church after arrival and spending a few minutes in prayer. Or alternatively, you may pray after departure on the bus, ideally midway into the trip or after you cross the border into New Jersey. If you make a pit stop enroute, you can do the ritual after departing from the pitstop.

# ORDER OF BLESSING ON THEIR DEPARTURE

## INTRODUCTORY RITES

### GREETING AND INTRODUCTION

When the group of pilgrims has gathered, Psalm 122 or some other suitable song may be sung. After the singing, the celebrants says:

PRESIDER: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: *Amen.*

PRESIDER: May God, our strength and salvation, be with you all.

ALL: *And with your spirit.*

PRESIDER: Brothers and Sisters, as we set out, we should remind ourselves of the reasons for our resolve to go on this holy pilgrimage. The place we intend to visit is a monument to the people of God. They have gone there in great numbers to be strengthened in the Christian way of life and to become more determined to devote themselves to the works of charity. We must also try to bring something to the faithful who live there: our example of faith, hope and love. In this way both they and we will be enriched by the help we give each other.

## READING FROM THE WORD OF GOD

### READING

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

READER: A Reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and Sisters, we are always courageous, although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yet we are courageous, and we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord. Therefore, we aspire to please Him, whether we are at home or away. For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense, according to what he did in the body, good or evil.

The Word of the Lord.

All: *Thanks be to God.*

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 24

READER: Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.

ALL: *Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.*

WOMEN: Who can ascend the mountain of the Lord  
or who may stand in His holy place?  
He whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,  
who desires not what is vain.

ALL: *Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.*

MEN: He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,  
a reward from God his Savior.  
Such is the race that seeks for him  
that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

ALL: *Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.*

## QUIET REFLECTION

### INTERCESSIONS

PRESIDER: God is the beginning and the end of life's pilgrimage.  
Let us call upon Him with confidence, saying:

ALL: *"Lord, be the companion of our journey."*

READER: Father all-holy, of old you made yourself the guide and way for your people  
as they wandered in the desert; be our protection as we begin this journey,  
so that we may return home again in safety, for this we pray:

READER: You have given us your only Son to be our way to you;  
make us follow him faithfully and unswervingly, for this we pray:

READER: You gave us Mary as the image and model for following Christ;  
grant that through her example we may live a new life, for this we pray:

READER: You guide your pilgrim Church on earth through the Holy Spirit;  
may we seek you in all things  
and walk always in the way of your commandments, for this we pray:

READER: You lead us along the right and peaceful paths;  
grant that we may one day see your face in heaven, for this we pray...

PRESIDER: Let us pray to our heavenly Father, saying,  
*Our Father...*

### PRAYER OF BLESSING

PRESIDER: All-powerful God,  
you always show mercy toward those who love you  
and you are never far away from those who seek you.  
Remain with your servants on this holy pilgrimage  
and guide their way in accord with your will.  
Shelter them with your protection by day,  
give them the light of your grace by night,  
and, as their companion on the journey,  
bring them to their destination in safety.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: *Amen.*

## CONCLUDING RITE

PRESIDER: May the Lord guide us and direct our journey in safety.

ALL: *Amen.*

PRESIDER: May the Lord be our companion along the way.

ALL: *Amen.*

PRESIDER: May the Lord grant that the journey  
we begin, relying on him,  
will end happily through his protection.

ALL: *Amen.*

PRESIDER: And may Almighty God bless us  
and protect us on our way.

ALL: *Amen.*

*It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.*



# ORDER OF BLESSING BEFORE OR AFTER THEIR RETURN

## INTRODUCTORY RITES

### GREETING AND INTRODUCTION

When the group of pilgrims has gathered, a suitable song may be sung, for example, *Urbs Jerusalem beata*, or some other song related to the place and circumstances of the pilgrimage. After the singing, the celebrants says:

PRESIDER: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: *Amen.*

PRESIDER: May God, our hope and our strength,  
fill you with peace and with joy in the Holy Spirit.  
Glory to God now and for ever.

ALL: *Glory to God now and for ever.*

PRESIDER: Our pilgrimage has been a privileged period of grace given us by God. We who have come in trust to this holy place are moved with a new resolve to be renewed in heart.

The sanctuaries that we have visited are a sign of that house not built with hands, namely, the Body of Christ, in which we are the living stones built upon Christ, the cornerstone. As we return home, let us live up to the vocation God has given us: to be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people God claims for his own, so that we may everywhere proclaim the goodness of him who called us from darkness into his marvelous light.

## READING FROM THE WORD OF GOD

### READING

1 Chronicles 29:9-18

READER: A Reading from the First Book of Chronicles.

The people rejoiced over these free-will offerings, for they had been contributed to the LORD wholeheartedly. King David also rejoiced greatly. Then David blessed the LORD in the sight of the whole assembly. David said: "Blessed are you, LORD, God of Israel our father, from eternity to eternity. Yours, LORD, are greatness and might, majesty, victory, and splendor. For all in heaven and on earth is yours; yours, LORD, is kingship; you are exalted as head over all. Riches and glory are from you, and you have dominion over all. In your hand are power and might; it is yours to give greatness and strength to all. Therefore, our God, we give you thanks and we praise the majesty of your name. "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should have the means to contribute so freely? For everything is from you, and what we give is what we have from you. For before you we are strangers and travelers, like all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without a future. LORD our God, all this wealth that we have brought together to

build you a house for your holy name comes from you and is entirely yours. I know, my God, that you put hearts to the test and that you take pleasure in integrity. With a whole heart I have willingly given all these things, and now with joy I have seen your people here present also giving to you generously. LORD, God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, keep such thoughts in the hearts and minds of your people forever, and direct their hearts toward you.

The Word of the Lord.

All: *Thanks be to God.*

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 84

READER: How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord mighty God!

ALL: *How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord mighty God!*

WOMEN: Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest  
in which she puts her young—  
Your altars, O Lord of hosts,  
my king and my God!

ALL: *How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord mighty God!*

MEN: Happy they who dwell in your house!  
continually they praise you.  
Happy the men whose strength you are!  
their hearts are set upon the pilgrimage.

ALL: *How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord mighty God!*

## QUIET REFLECTION

### INTERCESSIONS

PRESIDER: The Lord of heaven willed that in Christ's humanity  
the fullness of divinity should dwell as in its temple.  
Let us pray to him, saying:

ALL: *Look down from heaven, O Lord, and bless your people.*

READER: Father all-holy, in the Passover exodus you prefigured the blessed road of your  
people toward salvation; grant that in all the paths we follow we may remain  
wholeheartedly faithful to you, for this we pray:

READER: You set your Church in this world as a sanctuary from which the true light would  
shine for all to see; grant that many people will enter this sanctuary and walk in  
your ways, for this we pray:

READER: You have told us that here we have no lasting city;  
grant that we may always seek the city that is to come, for this we pray:

READER: You teach all the faithful to perceive the signs of your presence along all the pathways of life; grant that like the disciples of Emmaus we may come to recognize Christ as the companion of our journey and know him in the breaking of the bread, for this we pray...

PRESIDER: Let us pray to our heavenly Father, saying, *Our Father...*

## **PRAYER OF BLESSING**

PRESIDER: Blessed are you, O God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
From all races of the earth  
you have chosen a people dedicated to you,  
eager to do what is right.  
Your grace has moved the hearts of these, your friends,  
to love you more deeply and to serve you more generously.  
We ask you to bless them,  
so that they may tell of your wonderful deeds  
and give proof of them in their lives.  
  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

ALL: *Amen.*

## **CONCLUDING RITE**

PRESIDER: May God the Lord of heaven and earth,  
who so graciously has accompanied you on this pilgrimage,  
continue to keep you under his protection.

ALL: *Amen.*

PRESIDER: May God, who gathered all his scattered children in Christ Jesus,  
grant that you will be of one heart and one mind in Christ.

ALL: *Amen.*

PRESIDER: May God, whose goodness inspires in you all that you desired and achieve,  
strengthen your devotion by his blessing.

ALL: *Amen.*

PRESIDER: And may Almighty God bless us and protect us on our way.

ALL: *Amen.*

*It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song.*







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