

Blessing of Households **and Dedication of the Domestic Church**

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Frank Henderson's Site on Liturgy and Medieval Women

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Introduction

The blessing of households (or houses or homes) is part of the heritage of some Christian traditions, and one version of such a blessing liturgy is presented here.

It is important to explain the key terms used in the title of this liturgy: blessing, household, domestic church. What is meant by these words, and why is “household” used instead of “house” or “home” or “family”?

Blessing

At first glance it may seem that the blessing of households has to do with the space or dwelling involved. The place, however, is secondary. The primary focus of such liturgies is the *people* who live in the dwelling place and the *use* that they make of that place and its several parts.

“Blessing,” as used here, has three dimensions or levels of meaning. First, those who celebrate these liturgies bless God. That is, they acknowledge that the place in which the household dwells ultimately is God’s gift; in response, they thank God for this gift.

Second, participants in these liturgies ask God’s blessing on the household. That is, they pray that God be present with all who dwell in that place. As God is never absent from any place, this is really a prayer that the household be conscious of and experience the presence of God.

Third, people pray that this household be an instrument or means of God’s blessing in society and all of creation. That is, the household is called to be compassionate toward persons who have no housing or whose housing is inadequate. Furthermore, the household is called to work for the transformation of society so that the dignity and needs of all persons will be served through the availability of adequate housing.

Finally, liturgies of blessing households are not thought of as ways of making a place or the people who live there “holy” as if they were “un-holy” or profane before. Instead, dwellings are already holy because they are part of God’s creation; people who live in them are also holy because they are made in the image and likeness of God. These liturgies therefore affirm this holiness and give thanks for it. They also provide opportunities to accept the responsibilities that go with holiness, and to make a commitment to lives of holiness.

These considerations complicate the naming of this type of liturgy. Thus one might justifiably say blessing “of” households, or blessing “over” households, or blessing “for” households, or blessing “in” households, or blessing “by” households. Here I have kept the more traditional “of” with the understanding that no single preposition really is adequate.

House, Home, Household, Family, Domestic Church

People generally reside in buildings, and these may be of various kinds and have a variety of names. Thus some

live in houses or apartments. Some live in religious institutions such as convents and monasteries. Some live in health-care institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes. Those in military service live in barracks or quarters. Some live in hotels or boarding houses or hostels. Some live in prisons or other correctional or penal institutions. And some, unfortunately, live without adequate housing or permanent accommodation.

In preparing the liturgies of blessing or dedication presented here, I have primarily had *houses and apartments* in mind. However, with appropriate adaptations these liturgies may also be of use in other situations as well, but these adaptations have not been worked out here.

When a house or apartment or other dwelling place is occupied by persons, they usually become *homes*; bare architectural spaces are transformed by the lives of the people who reside there. This also applies to some other types of dwelling places, though other places may never become a home.

The term *household* is intended to shift the focus from the space or place to the people who dwell there. Households obviously come in various sizes and configurations. For example, a household may be a single person living alone, or several single persons, or a couple, or a couple with their children. Here I try to include all of these, and sometimes provide separate texts for “households of one” and “households of two or more.”

The term *family* refers to one particular type of household; because I am thinking more broadly, I generally do not use this term.

In contemporary Roman Catholic thought, the household is sometimes referred to as the *domestic church*. This ecclesial perspective on the household broadens the horizons of imagination and theology, and suggests new opportunities, challenges and responsibilities for the household and for the rest of the church. This concept was influential in the preparation of these liturgies. However, because this term and concept are not yet familiar and in wide-spread use, I generally use the term *household* rather than *domestic church*, though the title includes both. Those who wish may freely replace the former with the latter.

Shape of the Liturgy

This “Blessing of Households and Dedication of the Domestic Church” has five main parts. In the *Gathering* the participants come together physically and are named and welcomed. The purpose of the liturgy is stated, and the celebration begins.

Remembering Baptism: The doorway and foundation of the religious life of the household is baptism, and this is recalled and celebrated right at the beginning of the liturgy. In addition, the use of water engages the whole body - and can be fun as well.

Blessing of Rooms: In this part of the liturgy, all go from room to room throughout the house or apartment, beginning with the front doorway and continuing in the living room, kitchen, bedrooms, and bathroom. Persons, uses, memories and intentions are named that are particularly relevant in each case. (An appendix provides similar materials for the space where washing and ironing are done, where there is discussion and debate, for the guest room, work room, den or study, garage, basement, and for any other room.)

In each room the liturgy follows the same pattern, beginning with (1) an initial blessing of God, (2) a statement

of ecclesial affirmation, and (3) a prayer. (4) Biblical saints are named -- based on the scriptural reading that follows; their presence is invoked as companions of the household. (5) The reading tells a story of biblical persons and dwelling places. (6) A response highlights another biblical insight regarding dwelling places and households. (7) An appropriate action usually follows, and this part of the liturgy concludes with (8) spontaneous statements of hopes and dreams and (9) spontaneous prayers of intercession.

Blessing of Dining Room, Table and Meal: The dining room and its table -- whatever architectural shape this takes or furniture it may actually be -- are given particular emphasis in this liturgy, and a meal is shared.

Conclusion: This section recognizes the front door as exit from the household into the world, and includes final blessings and a sending forth.

Appendix: As already mentioned, texts for additional rooms are provided here.

How to Use these Liturgical Resources

1. The liturgy presented here should be regarded as simply a suggestion or model or resource. It is intended to be flexible and open to adaptation and improvement.
2. This liturgy does not have to be celebrated in its entirety or all at the same time. Parts may be used on different occasions. Parts may also be repeated as the membership of the household changes or as the dwelling place changes.
3. The liturgy presented here may be enhanced by song, dance or other artistic contributions.
4. Though serious, this liturgy is not meant to be somber or particularly formal. It should be an enjoyable experience, and should not be rushed..
5. If the household includes children, they are invited to participate as fully as they are able.
6. Guests -- including children -- are also invited to participate as fully as they are able.

The Planning Process

1. Go through the liturgy as presented here and decide what rooms and other main parts you wish to include on this occasion. Other rooms and parts may be set aside as inappropriate or for use on another occasion.
2. Look closely at the prayers and readings that are suggested here. Where alternatives are given, choose the one(s) to be used. If desired, rewrite texts given here, or write new ones. A few prayers have deliberately been left unfinished; participants will need to complete them in their own words.
3. Biblical passages are quoted from the New Revised Standard Version. Those who use this liturgy may sometimes wish to paraphrase this version or use alternative images of God or humanity.

4. The frequently used response, “Thanks be to God,” may be replaced by other spoken or sung texts.
5. Look closely at the actions that are suggested here and imagine how they will be carried out: the movement of persons, the use of water, flowers, candles and other lights, the meal, etc. What materials and other preparations are required?
6. Consider who will be invited as guests.
7. Decide who will preside in this liturgy; this role may be shared by several persons. Decide also who will lead specific prayers and read individuals readings. Again, these roles are intended to be shared.

Relationship to the Rite of Dedication of Churches

This Blessing of Households and Dedication of the Domestic Church has been inspired by the several official Roman Catholic liturgies that fall under the general title, Dedication of a Church and an Altar (for short, Dedication of a Church). The official rite views the church from three perspectives or as having three dimensions. One is the church building; the second is Jesus Christ; the third is the baptized People of God. In general the church building serves as an icon or metaphor for Christ and the People of God.

The Entrance Rite (which can take several forms), includes the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water. The Liturgy of the Word follows, but there are no Intercessions. The Prayer of Dedication begins with an Invitation to Prayer, the Depositing of Relics in the altar, and the Litany of the Saints. A lengthy and image-rich Prayer of Dedication follows. Then come the Anointing of the Altar and the Walls, incensing of the Altar and the Church, and Lighting of the Altar and the Church (which includes covering the altar with a cloth and decorating it with flowers). Finally, the Eucharist is celebrated and the liturgy concludes in the usual way. In all of this, the altar is central and the eucharist alone would be sufficient dedication.

In being inspired by the Rite of Dedication of Churches, and in moving from the official rite to this liturgy of Blessing of Households and Dedication of the Domestic Church, the following considerations have been kept in mind.

1. The emphasis in the household liturgy is more explicitly on the domestic church as people rather than the building in which they dwell.
2. In the official rite, the parish church building is viewed as essentially a single space, with one especially important focal point, the altar. In contrast, the home is viewed as having many different rooms with individual functions; some of these may be associated especially with individual members of the household.
3. The liturgy in the domestic church -- the household -- will be less formal than the liturgy in church, the participation of children will be fostered, and leadership will be shared. This is both natural and desirable.
4. In the official rite, connecting the parish church being dedicated and the wider church is denoted by the participation of the bishop. Here, representatives of the parish will be invited, and may be invited to lead some prayers or read some scripture passages. However, the dedication of the domestic church is not something that

has to be permitted or authorized or delegated by the parish church. Instead, the wider church community recognizes, affirms, celebrates and pledges to support the domestic church, which has a right to celebrate by itself.

5. The principal nonverbal elements of the rite of dedication of a church are water, relics, anointing with chrism, incense, and lighting of candles. Here water is applied to persons, though also to rooms if this does not cause damage to furnishings. Anointing with perfumed oil is applied to persons only. Lighting of candles is expanded to include lighting of electric lights as well. Incense has been re-imagined because so many people today are allergic to incense; in addition, its aroma clings to clothing and furnishings. It has been replaced by the use of flowers, which not only have a scent but also a beautiful appearance. Relics have been re-imagined to include anything that has to do with family history: pictures of ancestors, various heirlooms, etc.

6. The eucharist is the central act of dedication of the parish church. Here, the liturgy of dedication moves toward a festal meal. The preparation of the meal, however, should not be a burden on one or two members of the household and prevent their full participation in the rest of the liturgy. Meal preparation might be a truly communal activity. Alternatively, some of the food might be provided by friends and neighbors.

7. Texts for the dedication of the domestic church are biblical, but use different biblical passages than for the dedication of a church; in addition, they are used somewhat differently. Prayers of dedication of home and table are inspired by the corresponding prayers of the rites of dedication of a church and of an altar. However, the single expansive prayer of the official rite is here replaced by a number of short prayers.

8. The structure of the household liturgy is circular whereas that of the dedication of churches is linear. That is, a similar pattern of elements is used in each room of the house: blessing, affirmation, prayer, litany of the saints, scripture reading, response, an action, sharing of hopes and dreams, and intercessions. There is no discrete liturgy of the word; rather this is integrated into the liturgies for each room.

9. Whereas the rite of dedication of a church usually is a once-for-all event, the household liturgy may be repeated. It might be celebrated once a year, for example, or whenever there has been a significant change in the life or membership in the family. Parts may be celebrated separately.

Gathering

Outline

The People Gather
Greeting
Welcome
Greetings from the Parish Church
Naming the Household and Guests
Opening Prayer

The People Gather

Members of the household, relatives, neighbors, guests and representatives of the parish church, gather in the living room or another convenient space, where all are seated.

One or more members of the household, or parish ministers, or friends, may preside.
All who are able lead prayers or proclaim readings.
All participate as fully as they are able.

Greeting

A

May the love of God be with us all.

Response: Blessed be God forever. Or Thanks be to God.

B

Peace be to all who dwell here and all who visit.

Response: Blessed be God forever. Or Thanks be to God.

C

**The love of God, the grace of our brother Jesus Christ,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all.**

Response: Blessed be God forever. Or Thanks be to God.

Welcome

A

**Household and friends, this is a day of great rejoicing.
We have come together to give thanks for this household.
pray for its well-being,
and bless this home and its table.**

We are thankful that God dwells here with us.

Response: Amen.

B

**Household and friends, this is a day of great rejoicing.
We have come together to dedicate this domestic church,
pray for the well-being of this household,
and bless this home and its table.
We affirm that we are church.**

Response: Amen.

Greetings from the Parish Church

One or several representatives of the parish church bring greetings.

Naming The Household and Guests

Those who are not able to speak for themselves may be represented by another.

Each member of the household says:

**My name is N. and I am glad
to be a member of this household.**

Relatives, neighbors, friends and other guests say:

**My name is N.,
and I am proud to be present to help this household celebrate today.**

Opening Prayer

Let us pray. (pause)

**God of all love,
be always present to this household
and all who enter this home.
May your presence be celebrated,
your word proclaimed,
and all strengthened
to continue Christ's ministry of peace and justice.
We pray in Christ's name.**

Response: Amen.

Remembering Baptism

Outline

Prayer
Litany of the Saints
Reading
Response
Blessing and Sprinkling of Water

The people move to a bathroom or kitchen.

Prayer

A

For a Household of Two or More

Let us pray. *(pause)*

**Here, O God, may the members of this household
reaffirm their baptism and be thankful;
recall their baptismal ministries as priests, prophets and pastors;
and remember their bonds to the whole church and to all of creation.
We pray with Jesus Christ.**

Response: Amen.

B

For a Household of One

Let us pray. *(pause)*

**Here, O God, may N. / the member of this household
reaffirm his/her baptism and be thankful;
recall his/her baptismal ministry as priest, prophet and pastor;
and remember his/her bonds to the whole church and to all of creation.
We pray with Jesus Christ.**

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of Lydia, our ancestor in the faith.

Response: Holy Lydia, be with us today.

Reading (*Acts 16:11-15*)

Listen to this reading from the Acts of the Apostles:

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days.

On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul.

When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.” And she prevailed upon us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (*Ezekiel 47:12*)

On both sides of the river there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.

Blessing and Sprinkling of Water

The washbasin, bathtub or sink is filled with water.

**O God, you are the fountain of life:
we bless you for this water which reminds us of our baptism.
Let your Holy Spirit come upon us like cleansing water upon the body,
that we may be faithful in following Christ.**

All touch the water in some way.

Water may be sprinkled on each other (if this will not damage clothing) saying:

Remember your baptism and be thankful.

Response: Thanks be to God.

A

Water may be put into an appropriate container and taken from room to room during the rest of the liturgy. In each room water may be sprinkled on the floor (if this will not damage the furnishings) while one or all say:

This is the home of the baptized.

Response: Thanks be to God.

B

Alternatively, several members of the household might immediately take containers of water to individual rooms. There they will sprinkle water on the floor, saying:

This is the home of the baptized.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Afterwards, they will return to the bathroom and leave the containers there.

If appropriate, water may be sprinkled on the outside of the home, for example, by hose or with buckets.

Blessing of the Home

Outline

Invitation
Front Door as Entrance
Living Room
Kitchen
Bedroom: Couple
Bedroom: Single Adult
Bedroom: Child or Children
Bedroom: Other
Bathroom

Invitation

**Let us bless God, who dwells in this household.
Let us also ask God to bless this home,
all who dwell here,
and all who enter its doors.**

Front Door as Entrance

Outline

Blessing
Affirmation
Prayer
Litany of the Saints
Reading
Response
Action
Hopes and Dreams
Intercessions

The people move to the front door or entrance area of the home.

Blessing

**O God, we bless you for the door by which we enter this home.
Response: **Thanks be to God.****

Affirmation (*1 Corinthians 3:16, 17*)

**Household: You are church!
You are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in you.
God's temple is holy, and you are holy.
Response: Blessed be God forever.**

Prayer

**Let us pray. (pause)
Here, O God, may this household
show acceptance and welcome to all,
extend generous hospitality to friends and relatives,
give shelter to the homeless,
and show compassion to those in need.
We pray with Jesus Christ.
Response: Amen.**

Two alternative readings and related texts are offered.

A

Litany of the Saints

**We bless you, O God, for the house of Zacchaeus, our ancestor in the faith.
Response: Holy Zacchaeus, be with us today.**

Reading (*Luke 19:1-10*)

**Listen to this reading from the gospel according to Luke:
Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it.
A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich.
He was trying to see who Jesus was,
but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature.
So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him,
because he was going to pass that way.
When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him,
"Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today."
So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.**

**All who saw it began to grumble and said,
"He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner."**

**Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord,
“Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor;
and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.
Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house,
because he too is a son of Abraham.
For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”
*Response: Thanks be to God.***

Response (*Psalm 27:4*)

**One thing I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in the temple.**

B

Litany of the Saints

**We bless you, O God, for the house of John and Mary, our ancestors in the faith.
*Response: Holy John and Holy Mary, be with us today.***

Reading (*John 19:25b-27*)

**Listen to this reading from the gospel according to John:
Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother,
and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.**

**When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her,
he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.”
Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.”
And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.
*Response: Thanks to be God.***

Response (*Psalm 122:1*)

**I was glad when they said to me,
Let us go to the house of the Lord.**

Opening the Doors and Turning on the Lights

The front door may be opened wide, saying:

May all who come to this home find welcome.

The lights are turned on, saying:

May all who come to this home find hope and encouragement.

A

The lights in other rooms and spaces may be turned on individually as the people reach that room, saying:

Light of Christ.

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

B

Alternatively, members of the family may immediately go to each room and turn on all the lights, saying:

Light of Christ.

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Living Room

[or Family Room or both]

The people move to the living room/family room.

[There are three parts, all of which are used.]

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this living room [or family room].

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Part I

Affirmation (*1 Peter 2:9*)

Household: You are church!

**You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's very own,
in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of God
who called you out of darkness into marvelous light.**

Response: **Blessed be God forever.**

Prayer

A

For a household of two or more:

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**Here, O God, may this household
show love for one another,
experience intimate friendships
and share sorrow, affection and hope.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: **Amen.**

B

For a household of one:

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**Here, O God, may this household
welcome friends and relatives,
experience affection and joy,
and share sorrow and hope.
We pray with Jesus Christ.**

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of Lazarus, Martha and Mary, our ancestors in the faith.

Response: Holy Mary, Martha and Lazarus, be with us today.

Reading (*John 12:1-11*)

Listen to this reading from John's gospel:

**Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany,
the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.**

There they gave a dinner for him.

Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him.

**Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard,
anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair.**

The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (*Ezekiel 37:27*)

**My dwelling place shall be with them
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.**

Memories of Family

Family pictures or other remembrances of family history
may be displayed, pointed out, and commented upon, saying:

**The saints of God, our ancestors,
lie buried in peace,**

but their names will live on for ever.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Part II

Prayer

A

For a household of two or more

Let us pray. *(pause)*

**Here, O God, may the members of this household
acknowledge and honor their many different gifts;
here may women and men show respect for one other
and together speak prophetically.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

B

For a household of one

Let us pray. *(pause)*

**Here, O God, may this household
acknowledge and honor the diverse gifts of friends and relatives;
here may women and men respect each other
and together speak prophetically.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of Philip and his daughters, our ancestors in the faith.

Response: Holy Philip and four Holy daughters, be with us today.

Reading *(Acts 21:7-9)*

Listen to this reading from the Acts of the Apostles:

**When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais;
and we greeted the believers and stayed with them for one day.**

**The next day we left and came to Caesarea;
and we went into the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the seven, and stayed with him.
He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy.**

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Response (Psalm 26:8)

**O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell,
and the place where your glory abides.**

Flowers

From flowers previously placed in this room,
small bunches or bowls of flowers are taken to each room of the house, saying:
This is the home of the sweet-smelling and beautiful friends of God.
Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Part III

Prayer

Let us pray. (*pause*)
**Here, O God, may this domestic church
celebrate feasts and seasons,
intercede for the needs of the world,
and be a house of prayer for all nations.
We pray with Jesus Christ.**
Response: **Amen.**

Litany of the Saints

**We bless you, O God, for Mary, Lydia, Prisca and Aquila, Nympha and Philemon,
our ancestors in the faith.**
Response: **Holy leaders of the churches, be with us today.**

Reading (*Acts 12:12, 16:40, Romans 16:3-5a, I Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15, Philemon 1b-2*)

Listen to this reading from Scripture:

**Peter went to the house of Mary,
the mother of John whose other name was Mark,
where many had gathered and were praying.**

**After leaving the prison they went to Lydia's home;
and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed.**

**Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus,
and who risked their necks for my life,
to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.
Greet also the church in their house.**

**The churches of Asia send greetings.
Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house,
greet you warmly in the Lord.**

**Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea,
and to Nympha and the church in her house.**

**To Philemon our dear friend and co-workers,
to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier,
and to the church in your house.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (Isaiah 56:7)

**For my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.**

The Candle is Lighted

One or several candles are lighted, saying:

Light of Christ.

Response: Thanks be to God.

The candle(s) remain in this room, but later will be taken to adorn the dining room table.

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the living room
and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Kitchen

The people move to the kitchen.

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this kitchen.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation

Household: You are church!

**In Jesus Christ you are part of the household of God
and grow into a holy temple in the Lord.**

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. *(pause)*

**Here, O God, may this household
bless you for the richness and diversity of your creation;
prepare food that sustains bodies and spirits,
and share sustenance with the poor.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of Mary and Joseph, our ancestors in the faith.

Response: Holy Mary and Holy Joseph, be with us today.

Reading *(Luke 2:51-52)*

Listen to this reading from the gospel according to Luke:

**Then Jesus went down with Mary and Joseph and came to Nazareth,
and was obedient to them.**

His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (Psalm 52:8)

**But I am like a green olive tree
in the house of God.
I trust in the steadfast love of God
forever and ever.**

Gifts of Food for the Poor

Gifts of food for the poor may be selected and put in an appropriate place.

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with kitchen and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

BEDROOMS

Resources are provided for several bedrooms:

Bedroom of a couple

Bedroom of a single adult

Bedroom of a child or children

Other bedrooms

BEDROOM (Couple)

The people move to couple's bedroom.

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this bedroom / the bedroom of N. and N.

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Affirmation (*Ephesians 2:19-20*)

N. and N. / Couple / Parents / Household:

You are church!

You are citizens with the saints

and members of the household of God,

built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone.

Response: **Blessed be God forever.**

Prayer

Let us pray. (*pause*)

Here, O God, may this household / couple,

show mutual love, affection and enjoyment,

exchange support and encouragement,

comfort each other in bad times

and rejoice together in good times.

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: **Amen.**

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of Elizabeth and Zechariah, our ancestors in the faith.

Response: **Holy Elizabeth and Holy Zechariah, be with us today.**

Reading (*Luke 1:5-7, 23-25*)

Listen to this reading from Luke's gospel:

**In the days of King Herod of Judea,
there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah.
His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.
Both of them were righteous before God,
living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord.
But they had no children,
because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.**

**When his time of service was ended Zechariah went to his home.
After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived,
and for five months she remained in seclusion.
She said, "This is what the Lord had done for me when he looked favorably on me
and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."**

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Response (*Psalms 134:1*)

**Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,
who stand by night in the house of the Lord.**

Anointing with Perfumed Oil

The following thanksgiving may be said over perfumed oil:

**Blessed are you, Holy God:
you created spice-bearing plants
and oil-bearing trees,
and saw that it was good.
Ruth the Moabite anointed herself
and became one of the foremothers of Jesus.
Faithful, loving women anointed the feet and head of Jesus,
preparing him for burial.
Bless us and this oil,
that in our use of it you may be blessed.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, the Anointed One.**

Response: **Amen.**

The couple are anointed with perfumed oil
on the hands, forehead or face, saying:

You are image and likeness of God;

You are beautiful.

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the bedroom and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Bedroom (Single Adult)

The people move to the single adult's bedroom.

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this bedroom / for N.'s bedroom.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation (*Ephesians 2:19-20*)

**N. / Household, You are church!
You are a citizen with the saints
and a member of the household of God,
built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone.**

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**Here, O God, may N. watch with Christ
when she/he is awake,
rest in Christ's peace when she/he sleeps,
and always enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit.
We pray with Jesus Christ.**

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

The text appropriate for a woman's or a man's bedroom will be chosen.

**We bless you, O God, for the houses of the women who accompanied Jesus,
our ancestors in the faith.**

Response: Holy women on the road, be with us today.

**We bless you, O God, for the house of devout and charitable Cornelius,
our ancestor in the faith.**

Response: Holy Cornelius, be with us today.

Reading

The text appropriate for a woman's or man's bedroom will be chosen.

Listen to this reading from Luke's gospel:

**Soon afterwards Jesus went on through cities and villages,
proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.
The twelve were with him, as well as some women
who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities:
Mary, called Madalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,
and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza,
and Susanna, and many others,
who provided for them out of their resources. (Luke 8:1-3)**

Response: Thanks be to God.

Listen to this reading from the Acts of the Apostles:

**In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius,
a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called.
He was a devout man who feared God with all his household;
he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God.
One afternoon at about three o'clock he had a vision
in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius." (Acts 10:1-4)**

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (Psalm 134:1)

**Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord,
who stand by night in the house of the Lord.**

Anointing with Perfumed Oil

The following thanksgiving may be said over perfumed oil:

Blessed are you, Holy God:

**you created spice-bearing plants
and oil-bearing trees,
and saw that it was good.**

**Ruth the Moabite anointed herself
and became one of the foremothers of Jesus.**

**Faithful, loving women anointed the feet and head of Jesus,
preparing him for burial.**

**Bless us and this oil,
that in our use of it you may be blessed.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, the Anointed One.**
Response: Amen.

The woman or man is anointed with perfumed oil on the hands, forehead or face, saying:
**You are image and likeness of God:
You are beautiful.**
Response: Thanks be to God.

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the bedroom and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Bedroom (Child or Children)

The people move to the bedroom(s) of the child or children.

Blessing

O God, we thank you for this bedroom / N.'s bedroom / the bedroom of N. and N..

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation (*1 Peter 2:5*)

N. / N. and N. / Children:

You are church!

**As a living stone / As living stones,
let yourself be built into a spiritual house,
to be a holy priesthood.**

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**Here, O God, may this household
nurture infants and small children
and support the growth and independence of teenagers;
here may young people enjoy their youth
and receive support and guidance.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of Jairus and his daughter, our ancestors in the faith.

Response: Holy Jairus and Holy daughter, be with us today

Reading (*Luke 8:41-42, 49-54*)

Listen to this reading from Luke's gospel:

**Just then there came a man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue.
He fell at Jesus' feet and begged him to come to his house,
for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying.**

Someone came from the leader's house to say,
"Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer."
When Jesus heard this, he replied,
"Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved."
When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him,
except Peter, John, and James, and the child's father and mother.
They were all weeping and wailing for her;
but he said, "Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping."
And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.
But he took her by the hand and called out, "Child, get up!"
Her spirit returned, and she got up at once.
Then he directed them to give her something to eat.
Her parents were astounded;
but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.
Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (*Psalm 84:4*)

**Happy are those who live in your house,
ever singing your praise.**

Anointing with Perfumed Oil

Perfumed oil over which thanks has been given
may be used. (See above.)

The child or children may be anointed with perfumed oil
on the hands, forehead or face, saying:

**You are made in the image and likeness of God.
You are beautiful.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with this bedroom
and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Bedroom (Other)

These texts may be used, as appropriate, in place of or in addition to those given above, or, with texts already given, for an additional bedroom.

Prayer

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**Here may this household, O God,
dream great dreams about themselves and the world,
envision the possibilities of life in days and years ahead,
and converse with Jesus as brother and friend.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

**We bless you, O God, for the houses of Cornelius the centurion
and of Simon the Tanner, our ancestors in the faith**

Response: Holy Cornelius and Holy Simon, be with us today.

Reading (*Acts 10:1a, 3-4, 5, 9b, 10-16*)

Listen to this reading from the acts of the Apostles:

**In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius,
a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called.**

**One afternoon at about three o'clock he had a vision
in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in saying to him, "Cornelius."
He stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?"**

He answered, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.

About noon the next day...Peter

**[who was lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by seaside],
went up on the roof to pray.**

**He became hungry and wanted something to eat;
and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance.**

**He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down,
being lowered to the ground by its four corners.**

In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air.

Then he heard a voice saying, "Got up, Peter; kill and eat."

But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean."

The voice said to him again, a second time,

"What God has made clean, you must not call profane."

This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Bathroom

The people move to a bathroom.

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this bathroom.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation (*1 Cor 12:12-13, 27*)

Household: You are church!

**You were baptized into one body
you all share in the one Spirit,
you are the body of Christ.**

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

A

For a household of two or more:

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**Here, O God, may the members of this household
acknowledge that they are part of your creation,
and affirm that all creation is good;
here may all appreciate their bodies
and know that they are beautiful.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

B

For a household of one:

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**Here, O God, may N. / the member of this household
acknowledge that she/he is part of your creation,
and affirm that all creation is good;**

**here may he/she appreciate his/her body
and know that he/she is beautiful.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the many houses that Jesus visited.

Response: All Holy friends of Jesus, be with us today.

Reading (*Mark 7: 14-23*)

Listen to this reading from the gospel according to Mark:

Then Jesus called the crowd again and said to them,

“Listen to me, all of you, and understand:

**there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile,
but the things that come out are what defile.”**

**When he had left the crowd and entered the house,
his disciples asked him about the parable.**

He said to them, “Then do you also fail to understand?

**Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile,
since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?”**

(Thus he declares all foods clean.)

And he said, “It is what comes out of a person that defiles.

**For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come:
fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit,
licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly.**

All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (*Psalm 118:26*)

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

We bless you from the house of the Lord.

Washing of Hands

Some or all wash their hands, saying:

And God saw that all creation is good.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the bathroom and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

The people may move to other rooms; see Appendix.

If desired, there may be a pause.

Blessing of Dining Room, Table and Meal

Outline

Dining Room
The Table
The Meal

Dining Room

The people move to the dining room.

This may be a separate dining room, or the dining area of the kitchen, or both.

[This has two parts, both of which are used.]

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this dining room.

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Affirmation (*Ephesians 2:22*)

**Household: You are church!
You are all joined together spiritually
into a dwelling place for God.**

Response: **Blessed be God forever.**

Part I

Prayer

A

For a household or two or more:

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**Here, O God, may the members of this household
share meals and stories,
enjoy each other's company,
and be thankful for your many gifts.
We pray with Jesus Christ.**

Response: Amen.

B

For a household of one:

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**Here, O God, may the member of this household
receive, enjoy, and be grateful for
the gifts of your creation
that sustain body and spirit.
We pray with Jesus Christ.**

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of the Last Supper.

Response: Holy host, be with us today

Reading (*Matthew 26:17-19*)

Listen to this reading from Matthew's gospel:

**On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying,
"Where do you want us to make the preparation for you to eat the Passover?"**

He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him,

"The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples."

**So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them,
and they prepared the Passover meal.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (*Revelation 21:3*)

See, the home of God is among mortals.

**God will dwell with them,
and they will be God's people,
and God will be with them.**

Reconciliation and Peace

Those present may exchange words and actions of reconciliation and peace.

Part II

Prayer

Let us pray. (*pause*)

**Here, O God, may this household
share with those who are hungry,
be conscious of the needs of the whole world,
and respond generously.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

**We bless you, O God, for the households of the early church
that shared their food and drink.**

Response: Holy ancestors in the faith, be with us today.

Reading (*Matthew 25:35, 40*)

Listen to this reading from Matthew's gospel:

**Come, you that are blessed by my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;
for I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.**

**Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these
who are members of my family, you did it to me.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (*Psalms 78:23-25*)

**God commanded the skies above,
and opened the doors of heaven;
God rained down on them manna to eat
and gave them the grain of heaven.
Mortals ate of the bread of angels;**

God sent them food in abundance.

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the dining room and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

The Table

Outline

Dressing the Table
Prayer Over the Table

Dressing the Table

Members of the household cover the table with a cloth.

Members of the household and guests bring lighted candles from the living room and place them on the table or in other suitable places..

Members of the household and guests decorate the table and the dining room with flowers.

Prayer Over the Table

One or more of the following prayers is prayed.

These prayers are concerned with the table and the community that forms at and around the table. They are not prayers of thanks and blessing for the meal; such prayers are presented later.

These prayers may also be used on other occasions, for example, at formal or especially important household meals.

These prayers may be said over any tables commonly used by the household, for example both dining room table and kitchen table.

A (see Mark 2:15-17)

**Jesus sat at table in the house of Levi
with tax collectors and sinners,
and announced that he had come
to call not the righteous but sinners.**

**O God, make this table a place of hospitality and welcome
where we bring friends and guests and those in need;
make it a place where we experience reconciliation.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

B (*see Matthew 26:6-13*)

**Jesus sat at table in the house of Simon the leper
and after the woman had poured very costly ointment on his head
he proclaimed that what she had done will be told
in remembrance of her.**

**O God, make our table a place where we welcome and include all persons,
listen to their stories,
and respond in deed, prayer and remembrance.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

C (*see Matthew 26:20-35*)

**Jesus sat the table of the Last Supper
and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”**

**O God, make our table a place where we know the presence of the Risen Christ,
where we make visible Christ’s body, the church,
and where we share life.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

D (*see Luke 14:1ff*)

**Jesus sat at the table of a leader of the Pharisees,
healed the man with dropsy,
and said, “All who exalt themselves will be humbled,
and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”**

**O God, make this table a place of blessing and healing,
a place of challenge and learning,
a place of mutual honesty and humility.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

E (*see Mark 14:17-28*)

**Jesus sat at the table of the Last Supper
and said, “This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for many.”**

**O God, make this table a place where we build up the community of our household,
where we strengthen bonds among all present,
and where we show mutual responsibility.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

F (*see John 13:1-20*)

**Jesus sat at the table of the Last Supper,
poured water into a basin,
washed the disciples' feet
and wiped them with the towel that was tied around him.**

**O God, make this table a place of mutual service
where we are formed for the care of others
and where we are strengthened for lives of work and of ministry.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

G (*see John 12:1-8*)

**Jesus sat at table in the house of Lazarus at Bethany
and Mary took costly perfume, anointed Jesus' feet
and wiped them with her hair.**

**O God, make our table a place of joy and celebration,
where we do good things for one another
and where we show mutual love.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

H (*see 1 Corinthians 11:17-34*)

**Jesus sat at the table of the Last Supper
and said, "Do this in remembrance of me."**

**O God, make this table a place where we remember all God's blessings,
where we become persons of gratitude,
and where we are faithful to Jesus Christ.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

I (*see Luke 24:22-32*)

**Jesus sat at table at Emmaus,
took bread, blessed and broke it,
and gave it to them,
and their eyes were opened and they recognized him.**

**O God, make this table a place of surprises and growth,
of rest and rejoicing,
and of knowing the presence of God.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

J (*see Luke 7:36-50*)

**Jesus sat at table in the house of the Pharisee
and after the woman had bathed his feet with her tears
and dried them with her hair,
he praised her great love.**

**O God, make this table a place where we show our love for one another,
where we rejoice in our companionship,
and where we extend hospitality to all.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

K (*see Luke 22:14-38*)

**Jesus sat at the table of the Last Supper
and said, “The greatest among you
must become like the youngest,
and the leader like one who serves.”**

**O God, make our table a place where the dignity of all is respected,
where we show mutual love and respect,
and where we serve one another with grace.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

The Meal

Outline

Serving the Food
Prayers of Thanksgiving
Sharing the Meal
Clearing the Table
Continuing the Celebration

Serving The Food

One or more members of the household, with others,
may bring the food to the table in procession.

Alternatively, the food may already have been placed on the table.

All may be seated around the table.

Alternatively, because of the number of people present,
some may eat in various rooms.

Alternatively, the table may be the place from which the food is served,
and people will eat in various places.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

One or more members of the household, with others,
may say several of the following meal graces, blessings or thanksgivings.

Each person completes the prayer where indicated.

All may respond in an appropriate way.

A

**God, heart of compassion,
we praise and thank you because**

For this we thank you.

(Response)

B

**God who feeds the hungry,
we praise and thank you because**

For this we thank you.

(Response)

C

**God, lover of creation,
we praise and thank you because**

For this we thank you.

(Response)

D

**God, vigilant mother,
we praise and thank you because**

For this we thank you.

(Response)

E

**God, weaver of the web of life,
we praise and thank you because**

For this we thank you.

(Response)

F

**God, intimate friend,
we praise and thank you because**

For this we thank you.

(Response)

G

**God, divine midwife,
we praise and thank you because**

For this we thank you.

(Response)

H

**God, persistent lover,
we praise and thank you because....**

For this we thank you.

(Response)

Sharing The Meal

All enjoy the festal meal.

Clearing The Table

Members of the household and guests clear the table and wash the dishes.

Continuing The Celebration

People may continue to share stories, hopes, and dreams for a while after eating.

Conclusion

Outline

Front Door as Exit
Blessing and Sending Forth

At an appropriate time, the celebration is concluded.

Front Door as Exit

The people assemble at the front door.

Blessing

**We bless you for the door by which we leave this home
and go out into the world.**

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Affirmation

**Household: You are church!
You are Christ's ambassadors,
sent to proclaim the good news
to the whole creation.**

Response: **Blessed be God forever.**

Prayer

A

For a household of two or more:

Let us pray. *(pause)*

**From here, O God, may the members of this household
go forth to work and to play,**

**to serve the needs of the world
and witness to Jesus Christ as your Word and your Wisdom.
We pray with Jesus Christ.**

Response: Amen.

B

For a household of one:

Let us pray. *(pause)*

**From here, O God, may N. / the member of this household
go forth to work and to play,
to serve the needs of the world
and witness to Jesus Christ as your Word and your Wisdom.
We pray with Jesus Christ.**

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

**We bless you, O God, for the houses of the many women and men
who ministered in the early church.**

Response: Holy ministers of the gospel, be with us today.

Reading *(see Romans 16: 6-7, 12-13, 16)*

**Listen to this reading from Paul's letter to the church of Rome:
Greet Mary, who has worked very hard among you.**

**Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me;
they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.**

**Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa.
Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord.**

**Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord;
and greet his mother - a mother to me also.**

**Greet one another with a holy kiss.
All the churches of Christ greet you.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response *(Psalm 122:9)*

**For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will seek your good, O Jerusalem.**

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the doorway and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Blessing and Sending Forth

These may be led by one or more members of the household as well as guests.

**May God bless this household (and domestic church) / N.
and build you / her / him into a spiritual home
and a dwelling place for God.**

Response: Amen.

**May Jesus Christ bless this household / N.,
and knit you / her / him together
to grow into God's holy temple.**

Response: Amen.

**May the Holy Spirit bless this home and table
and make you / her / him a chosen race, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, God's own people.**

Response: Amen.

Let us all proceed in peace.

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Appendix: Additional Rooms

Outline

Where Laundry and / Ironing Are Done
Where There Is Discussion and Debate
Guest Room
Work Room
Den or Study
Garage
Basement
Any Other Room

Where Laundry and/or Ironing are Done

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this room / place where laundry and/or ironing are done.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation

**Household: You are church!
You are gathered spiritually
into a dwelling place for God.**

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. (pause)

**Here, O God, may this household
be faithful to its daily tasks,
express its creative gifts,
and care for each other.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response. Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of Martha and Mary, our ancestors in the faith.

Response: **Holy Martha and Holy Mary, be with us today.**

Reading (Luke 10:38-42)

Listen to this reading from Luke's gospel:

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village,

where a woman named Martha welcome him into her house.

She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying.

But Martha was distracted by her many tasks;

so she came to him and asked,

"Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself?

Tell her then to help me."

But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things.

There is need of only one.

Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Response (Psalm 127:1)

Unless the Lord builds the house,

those who build it labor in vain.

The Work of the Home

Some objects of household work may be displayed or pointed out, for example, cooking, washed and ironed clothes, art, crafts, saying:

Bless the work of our hands.

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the space where washing and / or ironing are done and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Where There is Discussion and Debate

[These texts may be added to the prayers and readings for other rooms, for example, the living room or dining room.]

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this room where there is discussion and debate.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation

Household, you are church!

**You were baptized into one body
and share in the one Spirit;
you are body of Christ.**

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. (pause)

**Here, O God, may this household
think creatively,
express views openly,
and listen respectfully.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

**We bless you, O God, for the house in which the Syrophenician woman,
our ancestor in the faith, found Jesus.**

Response: Holy Syrophenician woman, be with us today

Reading (Mark 7:24-30)

Listen to this reading from Mark's gospel:

Jesus set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a

Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go - the demon has left your daughter.” So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (Genesis 18:24, 26)

**Then Abraham said to God,
“Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city;
will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it?
And God said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city,
I will forgive the whole place for their sake.”**

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the space where there is discussion and debate, and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Guest Room

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this guest room.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation

Household, you are church!

**As a living stone / As living stones,
let yourself be built into a spiritual house;
may your prayer rise like incense in God's sight.**

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. (pause)

**Here, O god, may this household
receive and care for guests,
express love and care,
and recognize your presence in them.
We pray with Jesus Christ.**

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of Simon and Andrew, our ancestors in the faith.

Response: Holy Simon and Holy Andrew, be with us today.

Reading (Mark 1:29-31)

Listen to this reading from Mark's gospel:

**As soon as they left the synagogue,
they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.
Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever,
and they told Jesus about her at once.
He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up.
Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (Deuteronomy 24:17-18)

**You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice;
you shall not take a widow's garment in pledge.
Remember that you were a slave in Egypt
and the Lord your God redeemed you from there.**

Action

Some household items that are offered for the use of guests may be displayed or commented on, for example, linens or furniture, saying:

Come, Jesus, be our guest.

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the guest room and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Work Room

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this work room.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation

Household, you are church!

You are a citizen / You are citizens

with the saints,

built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. (pause)

Here, O God, may this household

exercise creativity and skill,

care for and repair things,

and enjoy the challenge of this work.

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of Aquila and Priscilla, our ancestors in the faith.

Response: Holy Aquila and Holy Priscilla, be with us today

Reading (Acts 18:1-3)

Listen to this reading from the Acts of the Apostles:

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.

There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus,

who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla,

because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome.

Paul went to see them, and, because he was of the same trade,

he stayed with them, and they worked together - by trade they were tentmakers.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (Psalm 90:17)

**Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
and prosper for us the work of our hands -
O prosper the work of our hands!**

Action

Some objects that have been worked on in this room may be displayed or commented on, saying:

Bless the work of our hands.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hope and dreams having to do with this work room and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Den or Study

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this den / study.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation

Household, you are church!

**In Jesus Christ you are part of the household of God
and grow into a holy temple in the Lord.**

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. (pause)

**Here, O God, may this household
read and write,
study and learn,
be stimulated, challenged and entertained,
and grow in mind and spirit.**

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of the beloved disciple, our ancestor in the faith.

Response: Holy disciple beloved of Jesus, be with us today.

Reading (John 21:24-25)

Listen to this reading from John's gospel:

**This is the disciple who is testifying
to these things and has written them,
and we know that his testimony is true.**

**But there are also many other things that Jesus did;
if every one of them were written down,
I suppose that the world itself could not contain
the books that would be written.**

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (Jeremiah 36:4, 6)

**Then Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah,
and Baruch wrote on a scroll at Jeremiah's dictation
all the words of the Lord that he had spoken to him.**

**In the hearing of the people in the Lord's house
you shall read the words of the Lord
from the scroll that you have written at my dictation.**

Action

Books or magazines kept or used in this room,
or material written here,
may be displayed or commented on, saying:

Bless the work of the human mind, God's great gift.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the den/study
and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Garage

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this garage.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation

Household, you are church!

You are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in you.

God's temple is holy, and you are holy.

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. (pause)

From here, O God, may this household

go out to serve you in the world

and witness to your great love.

Returning, may this household live in safety and peace.

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

We bless you, O God, for the house of the Ethiopian disciple, our ancestor in the faith.

Response: Holy Ethiopian, be with us today.

Reading (Acts 8:27-31, 36-38)

Listen to this reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Now there was a Ethiopian eunuch

who had come to Jerusalem to worship

and was returning home;

seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it."

So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah.

He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?"

**And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.
As they were going along the road, they came to some water;
and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water!
What is to prevent me from being baptized?"
He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch,
went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.
*Response: Thanks be to God.***

Response (2 Chronicles 9:23, 25)

**All the kings of the earth
sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom,
which God had put into his mind.
Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horses,
which he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.**

Action

Vehicles and other items kept in the garage may be displayed or pointed out, saying:

**Bless our means of coming and going.
*Response: Thanks be to God.***

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the garage and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Basement

Blessing

O God, we bless you for this basement.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation

Household, you are church!

**You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, God's very own,
that you may proclaim the mighty acts of God.**

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. (pause)

**Here, O God, may this household
store its belongings,
enjoy recreation,**

(- other -)

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

**We bless you, O God, for the house of the one who built on rock,
our ancestor in the faith.**

Response: Holy builder on rock, be with us today.

Reading (Luke 6:46-49)

Listen to this reading from Luke's gospel.

Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I tell you?

**I will show you what someone is like who comes to me,
hears my words, and acts on them.**

**That one is like a man building a house,
who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock;
when a flood arose, the river burst against that house**

**but could not shake it, because it had been well built.
But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house
on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it,
immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house.”**
Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (Psalm 18:1-2)

**I love you O Lord, my strength.
The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,
my God, my rock in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.**

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with the basement
and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.

Any Other Room

Blessing

We bless you, O God, for this room / for this [....] room.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Affirmation

Household, you are church!

**You are a member / You are members
of the household of God,
with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone.**

Response: Blessed be God forever.

Prayer

Let us pray. (pause)

Here, O God, may this household

[....]

We pray with Jesus Christ.

Response: Amen.

Litany of the Saints

**We bless you, O God, for the house prepared for Jesus' friends,
our ancestors in the faith.**

Response: Holy friends of Jesus, be with us today.

Reading (John 14:1-3)

Listen to this reading from John's gospel:

Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house there are many dwelling place.

If it were not so,

would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come again and will take you to myself,

so that where I am, there you may be also.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Response (Proverbs 24:3-4)

**By wisdom a house is built,
and by understanding it is established;
by knowledge the rooms are filled
with all precious and pleasant riches.**

Hopes and Dreams

People may share hopes and dreams having to do with this room,
and its significance in the life of the household.

Intercessions

Prayers of intercession may be offered.