

TRADITIONAL RITE FOR PROVIDING HOLY WATER

The holy-water font is a counterpart of the baptismal font; and the sacramental use of holy water is related to the great sacrament of water, baptism. Easter is the day par excellence for baptism, and every Sunday is a little Easter. Consequently, on the Lord's day the Church blesses water to be used in the ceremony of renewal of baptism, for as often as she sprinkles us with the blessed water a sign is given us of that sacrament which once bestowed the gift of life. The rubrics direct that the water may be blessed either in the church proper or in the sacristy. For the edification of the people it might be well to perform this blessing in the sight of the people, at least occasionally. The practice of putting salt into the water comes no doubt from the incident of the miraculous cure of the poisonous well (see 4 Kings 2.19-21), where the prophet Eliseus used salt to purify the water of the well.

1. On Sundays, or whenever this blessing takes place, salt and fresh water are prepared in the church or in the sacristy. The priest, vested in surplice and purple stole, says:

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord. All: Who made heaven and earth.

2. The exorcism of salt follows:

God's creature, salt, I cast out the demon from you by the living ✠ God, by the true ✠ God, by the holy ✠ God, by God who ordered you to be thrown into the water-spring by Eliseus to heal it of its barrenness. May you be a purified salt, a means of health for those who believe, a medicine for body and soul for all who make use of you. May all evil fancies of the foul fiend, his malice and cunning, be driven afar from the place where you are sprinkled. And let every unclean spirit be repulsed by Him who is coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world by fire. All: Amen.

Let us pray.

Almighty everlasting God, we humbly appeal to your mercy and goodness to graciously bless ✠ this creature, salt, which you have given for mankind's use. May all who use it find in it a remedy for body and mind. And may everything that it touches or sprinkles be freed from uncleanness and any influence of the evil spirit; through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Exorcism of the water:

God's creature, water, I cast out the demon from you in the name of God ✠ the Father almighty, in the name of Jesus ✠ Christ, His Son, our Lord, and in the power of the Holy ✠ Spirit. May you be a purified water, empowered to drive afar all power of the enemy, in fact, to root out and banish the enemy himself, along with his fallen angels. We ask this through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world by fire. All: Amen.

Let us pray.

O God, who for man's welfare established the most wonderful mysteries in the substance of water, hearken to our prayer, and pour forth your blessing ✠ on this element now being prepared with various purifying rites. May this creature of yours, used in your mysteries and endowed with your grace, serve to cast out demons and to banish disease. May everything that this water sprinkles in the homes and gatherings of the faithful be delivered from all that is unclean and hurtful; let no breath of contagion hover there, no taint of corruption; let all the wiles of the lurking enemy come to nothing. By the sprinkling of this water may everything opposed to the safety and peace of the occupants of these homes be banished, so that in calling on your holy name they may know the well-being they desire, and be protected from every peril; through Christ our Lord. All: Amen.

3. Now the priest pours the salt into the water in the form of a cross, saying:

May this salt and water be mixed together; in the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Spirit. All: Amen.

P: The Lord be with you. All: And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

God, source of irresistible might and king of an invincible realm, the ever-glorious conqueror; who restrain the force of the adversary, silencing the uproar of his rage, and valiantly subduing his wickedness; in awe and humility we beg you, Lord, to regard with favor this creature thing of salt and water, to let the light of your kindness shine upon it, and to hallow it with the dew of your mercy; so that wherever it is sprinkled and your holy name is invoked, every assault of the unclean spirit may be baffled, and all dread of the serpent's venom be cast out. To us who entreat your mercy grant that the Holy Spirit may be with us wherever we may be, through Christ our Lord. All: Amen.

4. On Sundays after the water is blessed and before Mass begins the celebrant sprinkles the altar, himself, the ministers, and the people as prescribed in the Missal and in the ceremony of the Ritual.

5. Christ's faithful are permitted to take holy water home with them to sprinkle the sick, their homes, fields, vineyards, and the like. It is recommended too that they put it in fonts in the various rooms, so that they may use it to bless themselves daily and frequently.

REVISED BLESSING OF HOLY WATER (1984)

During Mass:

After greeting the people the priest remains standing at his chair. A vessel containing the water to be blessed is placed before him. Facing the people, he invites them to pray, using these or similar words:

Dear friends, this water will be used to remind us of our baptism. Let us ask God to bless it, and to keep us faithful to the Spirit he has given us.

A. God our Father, your gift of water brings life and freshness to the earth; it washes away our sins and brings us eternal life. We ask you now to bless ✠ this water, and to give us your protection on this day which you have made your own. Renew the living spring of your life within us and protect us in spirit and body, that we may be free from sin and come into your presence to receive your gift of salvation.

Or

B. Lord God almighty, creator of all life, of body and soul, we ask you to bless ✠ this water: as we use it in faith forgive our sins and save us from all illness and the power of evil. Lord, in your mercy give us living water, always springing up as a fountain of salvation: free us, body and soul, from every danger, and admit us to your presence in purity of heart.

Or (during the Easter season):

C. Lord God almighty, hear the prayers of your people: we celebrate our creation and redemption. Hear our prayers and bless ✠ this water which gives fruitfulness to the fields, and refreshment and cleansing to man. You chose water to show your goodness when you led your people to freedom through the Red Sea and satisfied their thirst in the desert with water from the rock. Water was the symbol used by the prophets to foretell your new covenant with man. You made the water of baptism holy by Christ's baptism in the Jordan: by it you give us a new birth and renew us in holiness. May this water remind us of our baptism, and let us share the joy of all who have been baptized at Easter.

(Where it is customary, salt may be mixed with the holy water. The priest blesses the salt, saying:

Almighty God, we ask you to bless ✠ this salt as once you blessed the salt scattered over the water by the prophet Elisha. Wherever this salt and water are sprinkled, drive away the power of evil, and protect us always by the presence of your Holy Spirit. *Then he pours the salt into the water in silence.)*

Outside of Mass (Main Prayer Only):

A. Blessed are you, Lord, all powerful God, who in Christ, the living water of salvation, blessed and transformed us.
Grant that, when we are sprinkled with this water or make use of it, we will be refreshed inwardly by the power of the Holy Spirit and continue to walk in the new life we received at baptism.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Or B. Lord, holy Father, look with kindness on your children, redeemed by your Son and born to a new life by water and the Holy Spirit. Grant that those who are sprinkled with this water may be renewed in body and spirit and may make a pure offering of their service to you. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Or C. O God, the Creator of all things, by water and the Holy Spirit you have given the universe its beauty and fashioned us in your own image.
R. Bless and purify your Church.

O Christ the Lord, from your pierced side you gave us your sacraments as fountains of salvation.
R. Bless and purify your Church.

O Holy Spirit, giver of life, from the baptismal font of the church you have formed us into a new creation in the waters of rebirth.
R. Bless and purify your Church.