

The Churching of Women

benedictio mulieris post partum



The Churching of women (or simply "Churching"), while not a required ritual, should be carried out as soon as the new mother is able to leave the house (the Church permits women to stay home, without culpability, from church for 6 weeks after giving birth) and after the baby has been baptized.

Churching is the woman's way of giving thanksgiving to God for the birth of her child, and predisposes her, through the priestly blessing that is a part of the ritual, to receive the graces necessary to raise her child in a manner pleasing to God.

Know that Churching is not a "purification" ceremony, though it is imitative of the day, which we commemorate on 2 February ([Candlemas](#)), that Mary underwent her "purification" (ceremonially speaking and in obedience to the Old Law) and presented her Son in the Temple to Simeon.

The ritual

The woman will make arrangements with her priest (ideally, the priest should know the women of his parish and make the offer to her). At the appointed time, she will kneel in the Narthex, holding a lighted candle. The priest, wearing a white stole, will bless her with holy water, and say:

V. Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

V. Adjutorium nostrum in nómine Dómini.

R. Who made Heaven and Earth..

R. Qui fecit cælum et terram.

Psalm 24

ANT. She shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God her Savior: for this is the generation of them that seek the Lord.

ANT. Hæc accípiet benedictiónem a Dómino, et misericórdiam a Deo salutári suo: quia hæc est generátio quæréntium Dóminum.

The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and all they that dwell therein.

Dómini est terra et plenitúdo ejus: orbis terrárum, et univérsi qui hábitant in eo.

For He hath founded it upon the seas; and hath prepared it upon the rivers.

Quia ipse super mária fundávit eum: et super flúmina præparávit eum.

Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord: or who shall stand in His holy place?

Qui ascéndet in montem Dómini? aut quis stabit in loco sancto ejus?

The innocent in hands and clean of heart, who hath not taken his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbor.

Innocens mánibus et mundo corde: qui non accépit in vano ánimam suam, nec jurávit in dolo próximo suo.

He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his Savior.

Hic accípiet benedictiónem a Dómino: et misericórdiam a Deo salutári suo.

This is the generation of them that seek Him, of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Hæc est generátio quæréntium eum, quæréntium fáciem Dei Jacob.

Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates: and the King of glory shall enter in.

Attóllite portas, príncipes, vestras, et elevámini, portæ æternáles: et introíbit Rex glóriæ.

Who is this King of glory? the Lord Who is strong and mighty: the Lord mighty in battle.

Quis est iste Rex glóriæ? Dóminus fortis et potens. Dóminus potens in prælio.

Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates: and the King of glory shall enter in.

Attóllite portas, príncipes, vestras, et elevámini, portæ æternáles: et introíbit Rex glóriæ.

Who is this King of glory? the Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.

Quis est iste Rex glóriæ? Dóminus virtútum ipse est Rex glóriæ.

Glory be to the Father.

Glória Patri.

ANT. She shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God her Savior: for this is the generation of them that seek the Lord.

ANT. Hæc accípiet benedictiónem a Dómino, et misericórdiam a Deo salutári suo: quia hæc est generátio quæréntium Dóminum.

The priest places the end of his stole in the woman's hand and leads her into the church while saying:

Enter into the temple of God, adore the Son of the blessed Virgin Mary, who gave you fruitfulness of offspring.

Ingrédere in templum Dei, adóra Fílium Beátæ Mariæ Virginis, qui tibi fœcunditátem tríbuit prolis.

Outside the sanctuary, the mother kneels before the Altar and prays, thanking God for her child.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. (Now the Our Father is said silently)

Kyrie eléison. Christe eléison. Kyrie eléison. (Pater Noster is said silently)

V. And lead us not into temptation.

R. But deliver us from evil.

V. Save your handmaid, Lord.

R. Who hopes in Thee, my God.

V. Send her help, Lord, from the sanctuary.

R. And defend her out of Sion.

V. Let not the enemy prevail against her.

R. Nor the son of iniquity approach to hurt her.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come to Thee.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

V. Let us pray.

Almighty, everlasting God, through the delivery of the blessed Virgin Mary, Thou hast turned into joy the pains of the faithful in childbirth; look mercifully upon this Thy handmaid, coming in gladness to Thy temple to offer up her thanks: and grant that after this life, by the merits and intercession of the same blessed Mary, she may merit to arrive, together with her offspring, at the joys of everlasting happiness. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

V. Et ne nos indúcas in tentationem.

R. Sed líbera nos a malo.

V. Salvam fac ancílliam taum, Dómine.

R. Deus meus, sperántem in te.

V. Mitte ei, Dómine, auxilium de sancto.

R. Et de Sion tuére eam.

V. Nihil proficiat inimícus in ea.

R. Et fílius iniquitátis non appónat nocére ei.

V. Dómine, exáudi oratiómem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad te véniat.

V. Dóminus vobíscum.

R. Et cum spírítu tuo.

Orémus.

Omnípotens sempitérne Deus, qui per beátæ Mariæ Virginis partum fidélium pariéntium dolóres in gáudium vertísti: réspice propítius super hanc fámulam tuam, ad templum sanctum tuum pro gratiárum actióne lætam accedéntem, et præsta, ut post hanc vitam, ejúsdem beátæ Mariæ méritis et intercessióne, ad æternæ beatitúdinis gáudia cum prole sua pervenire mereátur. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum.

R. Amen.

The priest sprinkles the mother with holy water in the shape of a Cross.

The peace and blessing of God almighty, the Father + and the Son and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you and remain forever.

R. Amen.

Pax et benedíctio Dei omnipoténtis, Patris + et Fílii et Spírítus Sancti, descéndat super te et máneat semper.

R. Amen.

It is also customary for some parents to place their baby under the patronage of a Saint. After Our Lady, St. Anthony of Padua is especially besought for this purpose (when placing a child under the patronage of St. Anthony, it's customary to give alms, known as "St. Anthony's Bread," in return for his patronage). In any case, placing your baby under the protection of a Saint is a non-liturgical act, a private devotion, that you do on your own at the church.