A Blessing Itself

My Personal Review:
This excellent source for various blessings finds its best and most canonically appropriate usage in the hands of ordained clergy rather than the layperson. In this way it resembles such liturgical works as the Lectionary and the full Roman Missal, books which would find little valid and appropriate application within the family. A far more useful book for the home is of course the excellent new edition of the Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers.


The Blessings are divided into six parts, plus appendices for the installation of a pastor and of solemn blessings and prayers over the people. I often wonder whether some reviewers have seen completely a text, as we read reviews here which both lament the absence of blessings for objects, and those who find too many. Kindly permit me therefore to as briefly as possible sum up the enormous wealth of blessing herein contained.
Part One contains blessings for persons including various blessings for families, from engagement through elderly confined at home, including childbirth and miscarriage and adoption, as well as for children, sons and daughters. Also herein are found blessings for substance abusers and the addicted, for missionaries and for catechesis of various forms, for students and for Teachers, for interfaith and ecumenical gatherings, for organizations serving public needs, for departing and returning Pilgrims and for other travellers.

Part Two handles Building and other human activities, including new building sites, new homes, schools, seminaries, religious houses, libraries, parish halls, hospitals, offices, shops, factories, gyms and fields, transportation, boats and fishing (one thinks of New Bedford's fleets), tech equipment, tools, animals, fields and flocks, seeds, harvest thanksgiving, athletic events (one thinks of Texas) and meals.

The third Part covers Objects in the Church, including the Font, Lectern, Tabernacle, Chair, Doors, Bells, Organ, the Public Cross, the publicly displayed Images of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary and other saints, the chalice and paten, other articles of liturgical use, Holy Water outside of Mass, the Stations of the Cross and of the cemetery.

The fourth part includes other articles of devotion not directly connected to the Church and eucharistic liturgy, including the Rosary mentioned in another review, religious articles and scapulars, including their conferral. The fifth Part covers Feasts and Seasons, including the Advent Wreath (for this see also the Catholic Household Blessings book mentioned above), the Creche, the Christmas tree, homes at Easter and Christmas, throats on the Feast of Saint Blase (Feb. 3), Ashes for Ash Wednesday, Saint Joseph's table for March 19, the first Easter Meal, mothers at Mother's Day and fathers on Fathers Day, the cemetery at All Soul's Day (Nov. 2), Thanksgiving Day (once a semi-secular national holiday), and other prayers of devotion of food, drink and other "elements."

Part Six includes other and various needs and occasions, including pastoral service, Lectors, altar servers, etc., extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, Parish Council, Parish Societies, New Parishioners, Departing parishioners, inauguration of public officials, Thanksgiving and other various circumstances.

As you can see this 800 page ritual is very comprehensive, and nearly exclusively at the valid use of the ordained. There are adaptations for lay ministers, nevertheless, including the consistent alteration of the prayer "The Lord Be With You" which many in the laity are not aware are the exclusive prayers of the ordained priests and deacons. Even religious sisters do not invoke validly this blessing. Thus we read here in place of, for example, "The grace and peace of God, Our Father, and the Lord
Jesus Christ be with you all" with the response "And also with you", we read the lay minister must read not this but as follows:

"The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with US all now and forever." with the simple response "Amen." as it is not allowed to the unordained layperson to invoke validly any form of "Dominus vobiscum/et cum spiritu tuo." and then claim to follow the teachings of the Magisterium.

It is a joy to find the old devotions we once did but now are so hard to find, such as the blessing of Saint Blase, etc.

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