Celebrant’s Guides: Rites around Childbirth

Index of Resources

Useful rites and texts are scattered in many sources:

- *A Book of Blessings* (Canada) ........ BBC
- *Book of Blessings (USA)* .......... BBUS
- *In Sure and Certain Hope* ............ ISCH
- *Order of Christian Funerals* .......... OCF
- *Pastoral Care of the Sick* .......... PCS
- *Pocket Ritual* .......................... PR
- *Rite of Baptism for Children* ....... RBC

* BBUS is authorised for interim use in England & Wales.

References may cite page numbers (p) or paragraph numbers (n).

(a) Before Birth

Blessing of both parents during pregnancy:
BBC p53, BBUS p65 or p70

Blessing of the mother only during pregnancy:
BBC p56, BBUS p72 or p77, PR p107

(b) Stillbirth & Miscarriage

Rite of final commendation for an infant (including naming): ISCH n143, OCF n503,
and on-line text formatted to fit on personal organizer-sized pages.

Prayers for those who mourn a stillborn child: OCF n15 (p428)

Blessing of parents whose unbaptised child has died: BBC p60 or p70

Blessing of parents after a miscarriage – BBUS p86 & p91

(c) Blessings After Birth

Blessing of parents is normally part of the Baptismal rite, but when this must be delayed for pastoral reasons, a suitable blessing is at BBC p59.

Blessing of the mother only: BBUS p79 or p84

Blessing of an unbaptised child: BBUS p45

Blessing of a sick, initiated, child for whom anointing is inappropriate: PR p111
(d) Live Birth of a Gravely Ill Child

Pastoral note (PCS n280): a dying child should be baptised and confirmed, and initiation may be completed by receiving the Eucharist even if the child has not reached the age of reason. See also notes PCS nn168-174.

Minimal rite of baptism: Scripture (PCS p233 / PR p87); blessing of water (PCS p235); baptism (PCS p237 / PR p90); a deacon or a priest with no Chrism says the prayer on PCS p238 / PR p91.

A child in danger of death should be confirmed. Use the rite at PCS p239 / PR p91.

The Lord’s Prayer may be followed by Viaticum: PCS p241 / PR p93.

A child simply baptised in water who recovers may have the remaining rites supplied in Church at a later date: RBC p127.

(e) Normal Baptism

Rites in RBC according to number and context:

- **One child at Mass** .................................. RBC p89
- **Several children at Mass** .......................... RBC p39
- **One child outside Mass** ............................. RBC p65
- **Several children outside Mass** .............. RBC p13

(f) Death of a Child after Birth

Vigil for a **deceased child, whether baptised or not**: ISCH n125 (includes collects for baptised and unbaptised), ditto OCF n340

Prayers for a **baptised child**: OCF n25(p415) & n26 (p416)

Prayers for **those who mourn a baptised child**: OCF n8-12 (p425)

Prayers for **those who mourn an unbaptised child**: OCF n13-14 (p427)

(g) Celebration of Adoption

Rite of welcoming into a family a child who is already baptised:

- BBC p63, BBUS p94