

# Catholic Faith Corner

Understanding, Teaching, and Living the Faith

Sea of Galilee at Sunrise



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## Blessings, Bless, and Blessed

by KATHLEEN GLAVICH, SND on [SEPTEMBER 25, 2019](#)  
in [BLOGS](#)

### “Blessed Be the Lord God Almighty”



During Mass the other day, it struck me that twice we say, “Blessed be God for ever,” during the Offertory after the priest says, “Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.”



**Mary Kathleen Glavich, SND**

I'm a Sister of Notre Dame, of Chardon, Ohio, the author of eighty-plus books on religious education and spirituality, including a novel, "The Fisherman's Wife: The Gospel According to St. Peter's Spouse." I enjoy giving talks and retreats and was a pastoral associate at St. Dominic Church. I also edit and self-publish books for others.

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The word *ble*ss is a chameleon word. As in the case just mentioned, it can mean give praise and adoration to God in thanksgiving for his goodness and mercy. In the Canticle of the Three Young Men (see end of this post) prayed in the Divine Office, we call on all creation to bless the Lord.

On the other hand, to bless a person means to call down good fortune and divine favor on him or her. The priest blesses us at the end of Mass, making the Sign of the Cross over us. We also bless ourselves with holy water. On the feast of St. Blaise, we have our throats blessed as a protection. Saying “God bless you” when someone sneezes supposedly originated in 509 when a sneeze was thought to be a sign of the onset of the plague and Pope Gregory the Great ordered people to say it. Another theory is that a sneeze was thought to expel evil spirits.

Anyone full of divine life is blessed. Thus we speak of the Blessed Trinity and call Mary the Blessed Virgin. In canonization, before persons are declared saints, they are given the title Blessed. We refer to saints as the blessed in heaven. The Beatitudes each begin with “Blessed are” and spell out how to be holy.



Blessings are given to things to sanctify them. You might have asked a priest to bless your rosary or your house. You’ve seen him bless palm branches, ashes, candles, and maybe animals. But all created things are actually blessings from God for which we bless him! We sing to God “from whom all blessings flow.”

The Church’s *Book of Blessings* has more than two hundred of them. These include a blessing of a mother before childbirth, the blessing of a person suffering from addiction, the blessing of travelers, the blessing of a new home, the blessing of tools, and the blessing of an organ.



### About Sister Kathleen Glavich, SND

Jesus ordered us to make disciples of all nations and teach them. Mary Kathleen, a Sister of Notre Dame from Chardon, Ohio, responds to this call through writing, speaking, giving retreats, and teaching. Her motto, adopted from Eddie Doherty’s gravesite, is “All my words for the Word!”

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Blessings of objects used in liturgy are reserved to the clergy. However, because all of us share in the priesthood of Christ through baptism, laypeople can also impart blessings. You can bless your children or grandchildren perhaps while making a Sign of the Cross on their forehead or placing your hands on their head.



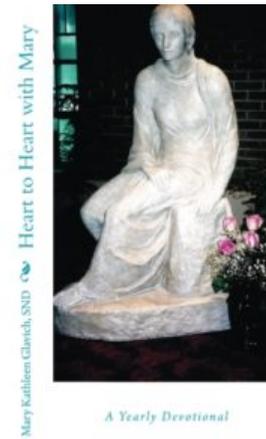
So feel free to bestow blessings. Be careful though: Recently I heard that to a southerner “Bless your heart” is a sarcastic comment!

Sister Louisanne and I share a birthday. A few years ago after Mass on “our day,” she asked the priest to bless us. He raised his hands over our heads and sang a beautiful blessing that he had composed for his parent’s wedding anniversary.

You might conclude this reflection by praying the Canticle of the Three Young Men from the book of Daniel:

Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord;  
Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord;  
You heavens, bless the Lord;  
All you waters above the heavens, bless the Lord.  
All you hosts of the Lord; bless the Lord.  
Sun and moon, bless the Lord;  
Stars of heaven, bless the Lord.

Every shower and dew, bless the Lord;  
All you winds, bless the Lord.  
Fire and heat, bless the Lord;  
Cold and chill, bless the Lord.  
Dew and rain, bless the Lord;



### Newest Book

In "Heart to Heart with Mary: A Yearly Devotional" Our Blessed Mother speaks to us every day of the year and a suggestion is provided for a response. It is similar to the popular book "Jesus Calling" and can be found on Amazon or purchased from me.

### Featured Book

Totally Catholic! A Catechism for Kids and Their Parents and Teachers

Do you wish you had a simple, child-friendly summary of what Catholics believe? This book took first place in the Association of Catholic Publishers awards 2014 in the category of Children’s Books. It can be purchased from Pauline Books and Media or from me. (\$14.95)

### A Heavenly Book

Do you believe in angels? Most people do. The Catholic Companion to Angels offers heavenly facts about these majestic creatures, confirming that you can turn to them for help. Uniquely, The Angels comes with three covers (statue, stained-glass, or painting). Choose the one you like best.

Frost and cold, bless the Lord.  
Ice and snow, bless the Lord;  
Nights and days, bless the Lord.  
Light and darkness bless the Lord;  
Lightning and clouds, bless the Lord.  
Let the earth bless the Lord;  
Praise and exalt him above all forever.

Mountains and hills, bless the Lord  
Everything growing from the earth, bless the Lord.  
You springs, bless the Lord;  
Seas and rivers, bless the Lord.  
You dolphins and all water creatures, bless the Lord;  
All you birds of the air, bless the Lord.  
All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord;  
Praise and exalt him above all forever.

You sons of men, bless the Lord;  
O Israel, bless the Lord.  
Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord;  
Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.  
Spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord;  
Holy men of humble heart, bless the Lord.  
Ananias, Azarias, Misael, bless the Lord;  
Praise and exalt him above all forever.  
Let us bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost;  
Let us praise and exalt God above all forever.  
Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven;  
Praiseworthy and glorious forever.

When have you received a special blessing?

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Available from ACTA Publications and me.  
(\$10.00)

### My First Novel!

The Fisherman's Wife is the story of St. Peter's spouse, the long-suffering but delightful woman who puts up with Peter and his obsession with the itinerant preacher named Jesus. Through her we meet Peter, Jesus, and other biblical characters. In Capernaum she witnesses Jesus' healings and hears his words. The book is based on the Gospels, legends, and what is known about first-century Jewish women. The rest is sheer imagination. Order directly from me FOR AN AUTOGRAPHED COPY at [kglavich@ndec.org](mailto:kglavich@ndec.org).

### A Bit of Humor

A Slow Student During indoor recess, the third and fourth graders were playing school. Taking part in the game, the teacher, Sister Janet, sat at a child's desk. Adam, who was playing the teacher, came up to her and asked, "And just how many years have you been kept back?" (from "Why Is Jesus in the Microwave?")

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**Manny** September 25, 2019 at 9:28 am



This subject has crossed my mind many times. Bless is a flexible word that seems to have several meanings. In the past I have had trouble understanding why we bless God. Why would God need to be blessed? But now I think of blessing as a kiss from God or a kiss to God. When I bless someone I think of it as invoking God to kiss that person or thing. When I bless God, I think of it as offering a kiss to God. In that way it all seems to make sense.

REPLY

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## About the Sisters of Notre Dame, Chardon, Ohio

The Sisters of Notre Dame of Chardon, Ohio, belong to an international congregation of more than two thousand apostolic women religious. We are one in mind and one in heart for the transformation of the world in Christ.



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