

Blessing of a Stillborn Infant

(Intended for use with the delivery of infants who are unable to sustain life due to miscarriage of pregnancy, termination of pregnancy or physical frailty resulting in death as a newborn.)

Opening Sentence

I chose you before I gave you life, and before you were born I selected you... (Jeremiah 1:5)

Opening Prayer

Holy God, we are gathered here in grief with N (and N), to honour this child who was not able to be brought to the fullness of life we hoped and intended for him/her. We seek the comfort and knowledge of your love as given to us in Holy Scripture, in the gift of your child Jesus who dwelt and died among us, and in your presence with us, as we bless him/her, name him/her and commend him/her to your care.

Let us remind ourselves of your knowledge of this child in the words of Psalm 139:

*You yourself created my inmost parts
You knit me together in my mother's womb
My body was not hidden from you
While I was being made in secret
and woven in the depth of the earth
Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb:
all of them were written in your book;
they were fashioned day by day
when as yet there were none of them. (Psalm 139: 12, 14-15)*

Reading from Scripture (Luke 18:15–17)

People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. But Jesus called for them and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." (NRSV)

Blessing

We ask your blessing upon this infant, child of N (and N).

We hold him/her, touch him/her in recognition of the love Jesus bestowed on the children brought before him, and we mark him/her with the Sign of the Cross in witness of our faith that he/she is now, and has ever been, held in the compassionate embrace of your eternal love.



Naming:

Our holy scripture has taught us that what is called into being, we know and remember through naming. In recognition of the place this child holds in our family and in our hearts, in honour of the brief time she/he was embodied with us, we now name him/her: *Name*.

We do this also that we might give voice to our longing for him/her, our grief at the loss of him/her, and our prayers to you on his/her behalf.

Let us pray:

O God, creator of us all, give us the grace to honour and remember our child *Name*. Let our love for him/her show forth in our lives. Sustain us in our trust in your unfailing love for him/her and for all children, born and unborn, who rest in the sacred mystery of your love. May we know your comforting presence as we gather our strength to go forth from this moment into our lives.

Joining our cares into one prayer, let us pray as our Saviour taught us:

(Lord's Prayer)

Commendation (*BAS* p.603 or the following)

Tender Shepherd of the flock, *Name* lies cradled in your love. Soothe the hearts of his/her mother (and father), and bring peace to their lives. Enlighten their faith and give hope to their hearts. We ask this in your name.

Dismissal

The eternal God is your dwelling place,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.

May God bless us and keep us.
May God's countenance shine upon us,
and grant us peace and love.

AMEN.

