

### What is a Blessing?

“Bless you!” is something we often hear said when a person sneezes. In origin it seems to have come as an instant prayer in the time of the plague and the Black Death where sneezing was the first sign that someone might be catching the disease. But we also hear the word “bless” or “blessing” used in everyday conversation. We speak of something being a blessing or a curse and we even say things like “bless him” when we mean quite the opposite.

The Latin word for blessing gives us a clue to its deeper meaning.

“Benedicere” actually means to speak well of someone or something, to say good things about them. A blessing is a statement of praise or thanksgiving for someone or something.

### What Comes Down Must Go Up

Most of us think of blessings as things that come down from heaven. We ask God to bless a baby and we somehow visualise the impact as descending from God and having an effect on the child. Yet the strange thing is that for blessings to come down they first have to go up. We first praise and thank God for a particular gift or person and then we ask that same God to come into play and be active in the life of the person now, or in the future use of some object. So if we bless a cross, what we are actually doing is praising and thanking God for the saving death of his Son and then asking that all who use or look upon this cross may be reminded of its true significance. Blessing objects means setting them aside for a religious purpose. Blessing people means asking for God’s grace for them.

### Public Actions

Most blessings are public actions. Besides the simple blessing of a Rosary that someone might ask a priest to perform at the back of church, there are also ritual actions, services of blessing. These can range from the blessing of a new cathedral to the blessing of pilgrims about to depart, from a snow plough to tools, from a pregnant woman to an organ! Very few things fall outside the remit of blessings.

Sometimes outward signs accompany these blessings, signs intended to bring to mind God’s saving acts. In the prayer of blessing we often see the minister stretch out his hands, join them or raise them high. Sometimes when a person is being blessed the minister lays his hands on their head in a gesture of calling down the Holy Spirit upon them. Similarly the Sign of the Cross is sometimes traced over a person’s head or made in a broader way over a group of people. Often, when objects are being blessed, we see holy water sprinkled as a reminder of our baptismal commitment. At other times incense might be employed, a sign of honour and veneration and a symbol of the Church’s prayer rising to God.

# ST. JOSEPH’S PARISH COLWYN BAY

01492-532670

[www.catholicchurchcolwynbay.co.uk](http://www.catholicchurchcolwynbay.co.uk)

## Sunday 26th September 2010 26th Sunday of the Year

### Prayer for the Parish

O God our Father and Creator

Where two or more are gathered together in your name you are there in their midst.

We bring to you our parish of St Joseph to ask your blessing as we meet the challenges of our mission of witness and discipleship.

Give us courage and enthusiasm.

Give us spirit of initiative and originality of thought.

Give us charity and unity and make us aware of each other as we work towards the renewal of our parish.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

St Joseph pray for us.

### EXPOSITION, ROSARY AND QUIET PRAYER

Saturday 11-00am to 12-00noon

### SATURDAY CONFESSIONS

11-00am to 11-30am

5-00pm to 5-30pm

### SATURDAY MASS

5-30pm

### SUNDAY MASSES

9.30 a.m., 11.00 a.m.

Monday 12.00 noon Mass

Tuesday 12noon Mass

Wednesday and Thursday 9-30am Mass

Friday 12-00 noon Mass