

BLESS YOU!

(SOMETHING NOT TO BE SNEEZED AT)

We all know that it's good manners to say "Bless you" if somebody sneezes. What a shame that this everyday sentence has lost its most important word: "God bless you."

Christians, believe that creation (people, animals and things) is fundamentally good, and wonderfully redeemed by Jesus Christ. The Church recognises and affirms this by offering blessings. Almost anything and everything can be blessed: food, water, devotional objects, homes, animals and even boats and bicycles!



Only Priests have the authority to give sacramental blessings; but any Christian can offer a prayer for blessing, or use holy water to bless things. One ancient and lovely tradition is for parents to bless their children, often each night before sleep.



Saint Ambrose said of this: "You may not be rich, you may be unable to bequeath any great possessions to your children; but one thing you can give them: the heritage of your blessing. And it is better to be blessed than to be rich."

One simple way of doing this is to trace the Sign of the Cross on the child's forehead and say: "May Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, bless you, my child, for time and eternity; and may this blessing remain forever with you. Amen." Why not make a decision this Lent to add this practice to your family's traditions?