

**PONTIFICAL OFFICES:
The BLESSING & INSTALLATION of an ABBOT**

**from the York Pontifical of Abp. Christopher
Translated into English by Fr. Hieromonk Aidan Keller
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[The B. ought to bless the Abbot-elect & do the Mass on a Sun. or great Feast, the candidate bowing his body together with 3 or 4 of his brethren. After Alleluya or the Gradual or Tract before the Gospel is begun, the B. shall announce it to the people, sitting in his throne with his back to the Altar. And the Abbot shall sit opposite him at some distance, vested in alb, stole, & silk cope. The B. reads:]

DEARLY beloved brethren, the abbot-elect N. is here present to receive his orders: wherefore we first, by authority of the Holy Fathers, weigh him in examination of those matters which pertain to holy religion & monastic profession.

B.: DOST thou desire, brother, to observe the way of life & the Rule of Saint Benedict, & diligently to instruct them that are subject to thee, that they do the same?

Abbot (A.): I do.

B.: And, insofar as thou mayest, to gather the goods of the Church hitherto scattered unjustly, & to preserve them for the use of the Church, the brethren, the poor, & pilgrims?

A.: I do.

B.: Dost thou desire to keep humility & patience in thyself, & likewise to teach others?

A.: I do.

B.: Dost thou desire to show thy holy mother church of N. & me, N., Bishop of the same, canonical obedience in all things?

A.: I do.

B.: Make thy profession.

A.: I N., elected to govern the Monastery of N., & by the custom of my forebears to be blessed as Abbot by thee, reverend father N., Bishop of the holy church of N., promise that I shall display canonical subjection & obedience in all things to thee & thy successors canonically following thee, & this I by mine own hand seal & confirm.

[The B. rises & says:]

MAY the almighty Lord, both in these things & in others that are good, be thy co-labourer.

[All say:]

Amen.

[Be it known that some, perhaps doing better, make this examination before the entrance at Mass until the Litany, sitting.]

[Then the B. shall prostrate himself before the Altar, & the Abbot behind him shall fall to the earth with his brethren, vested in the sacred vestments, & the Litany is done, & in the middle of it the B. says:]

THAT Thou wouldst vouchsafe to enlighten by the grace of the Holy Spirit & to ble+ss our brother the Abbot elect: we beseech Thee, etc.

THAT Thou wouldst vouchsafe to enlighten by the grace of the Holy Spirit & to ble+ss & sancti+fy our brother the Abbot elect: etc.

THAT Thou wouldst vouchsafe to enlighten by the grace of the Holy Spirit & to ble+ss, sancti+fy & conse+crate our brother the Abbot elect: etc.

[When the Litany is ended, there follows:]

OUR Father... [silently till the verse.]

[Then the B. rises & turns to the prostrate Abbot & sings:]

V. And lead us not into temptation.

R. But deliver us from evil.

V. Save Thy servant.

R. O my God, that hopeth in Thee.

V. The Lord keep thy coming in & thy going out.

R. And may He take from thee the swelling of pride.

V. The Lord preserve thee from all evil.

R. The Lord shall guard thy soul.

V. Let Him send forth unto thee help from His sanctuary.

R. And out of Sion let him help thee.

V. Arise, O Lord, help us.

R. And deliver us for Thy name's sake.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Collect: GRANT, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that Thy servant whom we have elected to the government of souls may attain the gift of Thy grace: that at Thy bestowal we, with him, may please Thee by our choice. Through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who liveth & reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God: through all the ages of ages. Amen.

Let us pray.

Collect: O GOD Who under the authority of Thy majesty containest the powers of all the kingdoms, we suppliantly pour forth our prayers to Thee, humbly beseeching that Thou wouldst deign to bless with the grace of Thy supernal & most high sanctification this Thy servant N., elected by us unworthy ones to the rank of Abbot: that in his days the devotion of discipline may have rebirth, & that by Thine assistance he may be able to furnish those subject to him an example pleasing unto Thee: & fighting for Thee with fear, obedience, & meekness, deserve to be everywhere protected peaceably by the shield of Thy majesty: mayest Thou vouchsafe to enrich him with the right hand of Thy divinity, that he may be able to render his brethren a worthwhile service, & with charity show them that in all places approach him things profitable. Be Thou to him his honour; Thou his joy in the home; in travels, his companion; in sadness, his solace; in uncertainty, his counsel; in sickness, his healing; in labours, his helper; in adversities, his defender; in tribulation, his patience; may He lay the cares of his mind upon Thee; through Thee may He learn, with advice, how to arrange his government of the flock committed him in wisdom: that, ever joyful, & ever exulting, gifted with the beneficences of Thy goodness, he may be worthy to rejoice, & to bear with good nature the prolongation of the present life by temporal good things, & to be joined unto the citizens above & the quires of Angels by an eternal intercommunion. Through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who liveth & reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God: through all the ages of ages. Amen.

[Then the Abbot shall rise, & the B. give him the Rule, written out in a book, saying:]

TAKE the Rule handed down to us from the Holy Fathers, to govern & preserve the flock entrusted thee by the Lord, so far as God Himself shall strengthen thee & human frailty shall allow.

[Then he shall hand him the staff, saying:]

RECEIVE the staff of the pastoral office, which mayest thou bear before the assembly committed unto thee for an example of just severity & loving chastisement.

[The Hymn “Veni Creator” follows, the B. intoning it on bent knees, & the Q. picking it up. After the Hymn, they rise, & the B. says:]

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Collect: IN Thy condescension, O Lord, we beseech Thee to be attentive over this Thy servant, & grant him true knowledge, solid hope, upright judgment, & holy doctrine, that he be found fit to receive the grace of Thy blessing: so that he may without offence follow in the footsteps of the Holy Fathers, & with holy admonitions make his followers to follow them, & may know that he who hath accepted the rule of souls shall, on the day of judgment, render an account of all these things to our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who liveth & reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God: through all the ages of ages. Amen.

Let us pray.

Collect: O GOD, Light eternal, Who enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world, we ask of Thy majesty with all earnestness that Thou deign to confirm with Thy manifold blessing this Thy servant N., who is ordained Abbot & shepherd by Thy doing, through the imposition of our hands, & wouldst anoint his soul & body with the infusion of Thy grace; that, cleansed from all poison of sin,

he may be worthy to be blessed by Thine all-powerful right hand, here & unto eternity. Through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who liveth & reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God: through all the ages of ages. Amen.

[Then the Abbot shall bow himself, & the B. say over him the Consecration:]

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Collect: O TEACHER of all good things, O God, Who by Moses Thy servant didst establish prefects to govern the assemblies: to Thee we pour our humble prayers, & Thee we entreat with minds devout, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe by the grace of Thy protection to defend this Thy servant N., whom the convening & election of Thy servants hath this day set to be the Abbot of Thy sheep: & grant him so to govern them subject to him that he, with them all, may attain to the kingdom of the heavens: so that, supported continually with the apostolic teachings at Thine assistance, O Lord, he may enter in through the portals of Paradise rejoicing, with fruit a hundredfold, &, praising Thee with them, may deserve to hear from Thee, O Lord: “Well done, thou good & faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will set thee over many; enter into the joy of thy Lord.”

[softly:]

Which mayst Thou Thyself deign to grant, Who livest & reignest, God.

[Here he raises his voice in Preface tone:]

V. THROUGH all the ages of ages.

R. Amen.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

V. Lift up your hearts.

R. We have them unto the Lord.

V. Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.

R. It is meet & just.

[Holding his hand uplifted over the Abbot's head at a distance:]

IT IS truly meet & just, right & availing to salvation, that we should always & in all places give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God: & Thee, O Lord, humbly to entreat, that as we pray Thou wouldst graciously pour the copious Spirit of Thy blessing upon this Thy servant N., that he who is made Abbot this day by the imposition of our hands may in Thy sanctification remain worthily chosen by Thee, so that afterwards he may never be separated from Thy grace as unworthy. May he receive today, Thee bestowing it, O Lord, perseverance in good works; in adversities, constancy; in afflictions, endurance; in fastings, hope; towards sinners, mercy; in humiliations, the chief place; hatred of pride; in right belief, love; in doctrine, watchfulness; in chastity, restraint; in luxury, abstinence; in caprices, moderation; in morals, erudition. Thee granting it, O Lord, let him persevere in this ministry in that degree to which the Levite chosen by the Apos-

bles, the holy Stephen, was worthy to endure. From this day forth let him despise all interaction with the Devil: by Thy bestowed blessing, O Lord, let him scorn things present, let him love things heavenly, let him long for things eternal: May he be an example & model of righteousness for governing & guiding Thy Church faithfully, that he may ever be made a capable overseer among his colleagues. Let him be mighty in counsel, assiduity, judgment, productivity, & discipline: Thee, O Lord, granting it in such wise that, keeping all Thy commandments beyond reproach with a heart clean unto Thee, he may, upon an increase of profit, unto the prize of victory of the heavenly summons, with his fruit a hundredfold, & with the crown of righteousness, attain unto the distribution of heavenly treasures.

[In a subdued voice:]

OUR Lord Jesus Christ bestowing it, Who liveth & reigneth with Thee in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, God: through all the ages of ages. Amen.

[The Collect for the dignity received:]

Let us pray.

Collect: O GOD, to Whom every power & dignity doth service, grant Thy servant N. a prosperous effect for his dignity, in which may he ever fear Thee, & strive unceasingly to please Thee. Through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who liveth & reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God: through all the ages of ages. Amen.

Let us pray.

Collect: ALMIGHTY, most merciful Father, we humbly entreat Thine omnipotence that Thou vouchsafe to pour out upon this Thy servant N., whom we deliver up to serve Thy servants, the Spirit of wisdom & understanding, & of discretion. Grant him so to take charge of & serve Thy holy flock, & in his days to execute the office of abbot enjoined upon him, that he might be able to please Thee, & by Thine assistance discharge perfectly his usefulness to Thy servants: on which account may he receive, here & in the age to come, a reward of his labour from Thee, O most loving Bestower, in the company of Thy Saints. Through our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son, Who liveth & reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God: through all the ages of ages. Amen.

[And the Mass is celebrated in its order, the Abbot standing near the Altar vested thus, until the end.]

[After Agnus Dei, he shall receive the pax from the B., & once Mass is said, he shall kneel down & kiss the B.'s hand, who shall lift him up & receive him with the kiss of his mouth, & bless him, & so dismiss him.]

[The Consecration of an Abbot is ended.]

[These things solemnly done (consecration of Abbot or Abbess), he/she is led to his/her place, & in the Q., to the ringing of the church bells, the B. invests him/her, saying:]

B.: RECEIVE the power to rule this church & its congregation, & all things that pertain to her inwardly or externally. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour & Redeemer. Who with the Father & the Holy Spirit liveth & reigneth, God: through all the ages of ages. Amen.

[Then he/she is reverently set up in the stall where his/her predecessor was wont to stand, the B. saying nevertheless:]

B.: STAND in righteousness & sanctity, & maintain the place entrusted thee by God. For God hath power to increase His grace towards thee.

[And so the Te Deum is begun. Afterwards, all the brethren or sisters give him/her the kiss of peace with all reverence, kneeling before him/her. Before all else they shall view him/her as a spiritual father or mother given by God, & established therein honestly & humbly. Then:]

V. Save Thy servant (handmaid).

R. O my God, that hopeth in Thee.

V. Be unto him/her, O Lord, a tower of strength.

R. Against the face of the enemy.

V. Let the enemy have no advantage over him/her.

R. Nor let the son of iniquity avail to hurt him/her.

V. Remember Thy congregation.

R. Which Thou hast purchased from the beginning.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto Thee.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Collect: HEARKEN, O Lord, to our prayers, & send forth the Spirit of Thy benediction upon this Thy servant (handmaid) N.: that given the heavenly gift he/she may be able to acquire the gift of Thy grace, & to offer others an example of upright life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Afterwards the new Abbot vests, & Mass is solemnly said.]

[The Installation service is ended.]