

# BLESSINGS IN OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

*Fr. Dave Heney*

---

*In December, 2023, Pope Francis clarified the ancient practice of blessing objects like rosaries and statues, and blessing persons like at weddings or birthdays. Of course, the media often misrepresent Church statements, often intentionally. This is a short summary of the ten-page Vatican document which is also at [stbrunochurch.org](http://stbrunochurch.org)*

## **Did the pope change Catholic teaching on marriage?**

No, he did not. Catholic teaching on marriage comes from Our Lord, (*Matthew 19:14, Genesis 2:24*) and honored by the constant teaching of the Church for 2,000 years. From the beginning, marriage is between one man and one woman. The Church actually does not have the authority to make any changes about marriage.

## **What about same-sex couples?**

Our Lord is always happy when people love each other! Our Lord is the authentic model of just how to love and we are always grateful for that. Since marriage is only between one man and one woman we can never call any other arrangement a marriage. (See my articles: *Same-Sex Couples and Marriage*, and *A Non-Religious View of Same-Sex Couples and Marriage* at [stbrunochurch.org](http://stbrunochurch.org))

## **What is a “Blessing?”**

A blessing is a prayer to God that can do several things. It can be a “descending” blessing such as a prayer to *call down* God’s grace or assistance upon a person in need. A blessing may also be an “ascending” prayer such as a wish for a banquet to be *in praise of God* and a source of love and friendship or for a rosary or statue to be an inspiration to deeper faith in God. A blessing always seeks to have God’s will be done either through an inspirational object or a person’s behavior.

Although blessed objects may be sold, the price cannot change depending on it being blessed.

There are informal blessings such as blessing objects used to enhance our faith, like rosaries and statues, and there are formal blessings like those at Mass or the Sacraments that use set words and actions in an official ritual book.

## **How did the pope clarify blessings?**

The pope distinguished between formal and informal blessings. For example, a family may ask a priest to bless a child who is facing challenges at school. There is no examination of the child’s behavior, just a brief informal spontaneous prayer that wisdom and strength for new behavior will be in accord with God’s will. There is no formal ritual or set words and actions for this.

A priest could also offer an informal blessing to a same-sex couple, or a couple in an irregular marriage, simply by praying for their peace, health, safety, or wisdom. In no way does this blessing signal approval for any behavior not in accord with Our Lord, or any approval of same-sex marriage. This informal blessing may never be at Mass or connected to any liturgical rite.

Asking for a blessing is always a desire for help to live more fully according to God’s will. Anyone can ask for an informal blessing no matter what their condition. We all need God’s help!

All created things and persons ultimately lead us back to their creator. Blessings are a prayerful reminder of that beautiful truth.

*Fr. Dave Heney*  
*daveheney.com*  
*daveheney@gmail.com*