

Fr. Perozich comments —

Seminary studies train a man to be a parish priest for the salvation of souls. Post seminary theological studies train a priest for deeper understandings to share with God's people, including parish priests, whose daily work may not allow time for the same degree of study.

I have always been an spp, simple parish priest, trying my best to impart grace and knowledge as it has been given to me.

Like a family doctor, general practitioner, has medical knowledge I, a simple curate, have knowledge of things regarding faith, morals, and liturgy.

As family doctors rely on researchers to give to these doctors the latest science, so do parish priests rely on FAITHFUL theologians for explanations.

Many times I do not have the ability to make the distinctions to answer the questions of the faithful.

Fr. Nicola Bux, a FAITHFUL theologian, helps me, so that I can help you by sending along the distinctions in order to clear up confusion and chaos from the Vatican between a prayer and a blessing.

*A **blessing** is a call upon God to approve of something or someone in accord with God's divine plan.*

*A **prayer** is an insistent request.*

In the Book of Numbers 22, Balak demanded Balaam invoke God to curse the Jewish people, a calling upon the Most High to do a sinful act.

Blessings for approval of those who live in sin and wish to remain there are not possible.

Prayers for healing, for chastity, for conversion are always appropriate, and must be well crafted, even if spontaneous, but not given in a liturgical context of sacramental celebration.

The words highlighted in blue are links to the actual texts quoted in the article for those who like more than a few bites of information.

‘Non-Liturgical’ Blessings Do Not Exist

A recent Vatican News article used a 2000 instruction by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to justify the blessing of irregular couples.



Pope Benedict XVI delivers his 'Urbi et Orbi' blessing from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica on Dec. 25, 2011. (photo: Franco Origlia / Getty Image)

Father Nicola Bux
March 4, 2024

On Feb. 27, Vatican News published an [article](#) headlined: *'Fiducia Supplicans,' Non-liturgical Blessings and Pope Benedict's Distinction.*

The aim of the article was to assert that distinguishing between rituals inserted into liturgical books and pastoral or spontaneous prayers is the same criterion now being used to admit the possibility of blessing irregular couples.

The article juxtaposes the recent Declaration with some passages from the Vatican instruction *Ardens Felicitatis*, promulgated by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on Sept. 14, 2000.

That document concerned prayers and how they can obtain healing from God, and it arose from the need to bring order to the confusion of those years about prayer gatherings and the charism of healing.

However, the comparison that the **Vatican News article** makes between these two documents **is completely wrong.**

Firstly, it's important to point out that *prayer* is an insistent request, as the word itself indicates, while a *blessing* is a formula of approval (*bene dicere*) from above, that is, from God.

In the 2000 Instruction, it explains that the goal of prayers for healing is to invoke deliverance from bodily and spiritual evil, and it stresses that no prayer can be made to God to confirm the state of sin into which one had fallen.

Ardens Felicitatis aimed to help regulate the growing novelty of prayer gatherings given that they are combined with liturgical celebrations aimed at imploring healing from God, underlining the liturgical aspect over which the Church must watch and give norms, so that such practices may be disciplined righteously.

After presenting the desire for healing and the prayer to obtain it, explaining how Jesus exercised the charism of healing, and outlining the charism of healing in the present context, the Instruction goes on to discuss disciplinary provisions.

“Prayers to obtain healing,” the Instruction stresses, **“are called liturgical if they are found in approved liturgical books,” otherwise they are spontaneous prayers.** Regarding these, they must remain distinct from liturgical prayers and must not be confused with them, as the Instruction makes clear.

They are not blessings, and they have no efficacy as blessings, especially if the faithful do not want to leave the state of sin. Even the reference to the *Ordo benedictionis infirmorum*, found in the *Rituale Romanum*, in point 2 of the Instruction, concerns “the euchological texts,” that is, the healing prayers contained therein, not the blessing formulas, which instead constitute the sacramentals proper.

Nowhere in the Instruction, in fact, is there any mention of blessings, beyond a single reference to “the blessings of good health.” The Vatican News article, then, incurs a glaring oversight by calling Ratzinger into question.

It is worth clarifying here the difference between **“liturgical” (from the Greek: action of the holy people) which is the public worship of the Church, the people of God gathered in the Name of the Trinity, and “non-liturgical,” which are exercises of piety that the individual believer does alone or with others.**

“Non-liturgical” practices do not involve the Church and require her vigilance, so that they do not slip into hysteria, artifice, spectacle, as the Instruction says (cf. art. 5, § 3). Liturgy and private piety are ordered to each other, but should not be confused.

Finally, it is worth stating that **blessing, *berakah* in Hebrew, as a spiritual and sacred act, memorializes and praises God’s presence and intercedes, so that his power descends on the person or object and sanctifies them. A blessing nourishes and expresses faith, through the Sign of the Cross and the sprinkling of holy water.**

A blessing is a sacramental, that is, an extension of the grace of the sacrament, which in order to be received requires a good disposition to receive the principal effect of the sacrament to which it is ordained (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, a. 1667).

A blessing is not compatible with a state of sin: One cannot bless that which breaks, consumes, destroys. To which sacrament, therefore, is the blessing of an irregular couple ordered? It is not true that blessing promotes and justifies nothing, because it implicitly promotes “disordered acts” and a pseudo union.

In the text of *Fiducia Supplicans*, the expression “blessings of same-sex couples” recurs explicitly seven times. But when it comes to people of the same sex, there is no such thing as a couple. They are similar, and being similar, they make a *pair* but not a couple.

So, there is no such thing as a blessing that is not liturgical, when it is made by an ordained minister, who exercises the *munus sanctificandi* with and in the sacred liturgy, on behalf of the Church.

The Vatican News article, therefore, is misleading and constitutes a shameless falsification, perhaps with the intent to please the court.

Father Nicola Bux is an Italian theologian and former consulter to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. This is a shortened version of a longer text published in Italian: ilpensierocattolico.it/new/nicola-bux-non-esistono-benedizioni-non-liturgiche/