

EDITORIAL

ST LAWRENCE, THE UNBORN CHILD AND MEDICINE



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The Vatican has approved a Blessing for a Child in the Womb. The Church has always, rightly cherished the weak, the small and the vulnerable. Among the greatest of the weak are the unborn. Beautiful, new, human souls with life, health and so much to give. And from the time of conception and increasingly afterwards, couples naturally pray for their new child.

It was in Roman times that the Emperor Sixtus, seeing the growing wealth of the Church, demanded of St Lawrence that he brings the riches of the Church to the Emperor so that he could appropriate them. As we know, St. Lawrence asked for three days to do this in, and then arrived with the disabled, lame and the sick. These, he announced, “are the treasures of my Church”.

While prayers for unborn children and their mothers are not new, for old missals have blessings for the mother and child, these latest prayers are welcome. The journey from conception to birth is hazardous indeed but even more so a journey of great grace. The approval came on the feast of the Annunciation from Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in Rome. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo was right to point out that there really can be no better day to announce this news than on the feast of the Annunciation, when we remember Mary's 'yes' to God and the incarnation of that child in her womb in order to save the world.

The blessing was prepared to support parents awaiting the birth of a child and to encourage parish prayers for, and recognition of, the precious gift of the child in the womb, and to foster respect for human life within society. It can be offered within the context of the Mass as well as outside of Mass.

It is indeed a beautiful blessing. Medicine must remember the beauty and unique dignity of every new life with which it deals.

PRAYER FOR THE UNBORN CHILD.

*Humble Mary of Nazareth, you were chosen my God to bear within you our world's greatest gift, the Saviour of all humanity. I come to you now on behalf of (here mention name) who prays for the health and safety of the child that God has graced her to conceive.*

*Guard this life that God has created, and protect the mother God has chosen for this child. Let your gently hands, like that of a skilled physician, assist in her delivery so that this baby will know good health and lasting happiness.*

*May her child be favoured with the grace of Holy Baptism, and grow to love our Lord Jesus Christ above all else in this world. Amen.*