

Blessing of a Christmas Manger or Nativity Scene

The custom of displaying a Christmas manger or nativity scene, in its present form, traces back to **St. Francis of Assisi**, who created the first Christmas crèche for Christmas Eve in **1223**. His simple desire—to help people contemplate the humility, poverty, and love of the Savior’s birth—has become a beloved Christian tradition throughout the world.

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take place on the **Vigil of Christmas** or at another suitable time. When the manger is set up in the home, it is fitting that the blessing be led by a **parent or another family member**.

The Blessing

All make the sign of the cross as the leader says:

Leader:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Liturgy of the Word

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus
that the whole world should be enrolled.

This was the first enrollment,
when Quirinius was governor of Syria.
So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town.

And Joseph too went up from Galilee
from the town of Nazareth to Judea,
to the city of David that is called Bethlehem,
because he was of the house and family of David,
to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed,
who was with child.

While they were there,
the time came for her to have her child,
and she gave birth to her firstborn son.
She wrapped him in swaddling clothes
and laid him in a manger,
because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region
living in the fields
and keeping the night watch over their flock.

The Gospel of the Lord.

R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer of Blessing

Leader (with hands joined):

God of every nation and people,
from the very beginning of creation
you have made manifest your love:

when our need for a Savior was great
you sent your Son
to be born of the Virgin Mary.

To our lives he brings joy and peace,
justice, mercy, and love.

Lord,
bless all who look upon this manger;
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,
and raise our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Savior of all,
and who lives and reigns forever and ever.

All: Amen.