

Blessing of a Christmas Manger or Nativity Scene



Did you know that St. Francis of Assisi made the Christmas crèche, or manger, for Christmas Eve of 1223? He wanted to remind everyone why we celebrate Christmas, the Nativity of the Lord. St. Francis made the nativity scene in the style of a typical Italian manger, familiar to people in the village, in order to make the scene more real to everyone. He wanted everyone know that Jesus was born to be with them, and he wanted all people to recognize themselves in the Nativity scene.

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

All make the sign of the cross

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Scripture Reading (select one)

Luke 2:1 (lines 1-8) or

Isaiah 7:10 (lines 10-15, the birth of Emmanuel).

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer & Blessing

Leader (all join hands):

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.

—from *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*

