

Blessing of a Christmas Manger or Nativity Scene

[1541]

In its present form the custom of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ owes its origin to St. Francis of Assisi, who made the Christmas crèche or manger for Christmas Eve of 1223.

[1542]

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time.

[1545]

When the manger is set up in the home, it is appropriate that it be blessed by a parent or another family member.

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

[1566]

Our help is in the name of the Lord.
R/. Who made heaven and earth.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

[1567]

Listen to the words of the holy Gospel according to Luke:

2:1-8

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.

Or Isaiah 7:10-15—*The birth of Emmanuel.*

[1568]

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.
R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

(cont'd)

The leader prays 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.

R/. Amen.

—From Book of Blessings