

**ORDER OF BLESSING OF A MANGER
OR NATIVITY SCENE
WITHIN A CELEBRATION OF
THE WORD OF GOD**



INTRODUCTORY RITES

When the family has gathered, a suitable song may be sung, after which the Leader says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All make the Sign of the Cross and reply:

R. Amen.

LEADER:

Praised be Jesus Christ, who dwells among us, now and for ever.

R. AMEN.

LEADER:

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, we pause to bless this Christmas manger scene. The practice of erecting such mangers was begun by Saint Francis of Assisi as a means to set forth the message of Christmas.

When we look upon these figures, the Christmas gospel comes alive and we are moved to rejoice in the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God.

READING OF THE WORD OF GOD

Brothers and sisters listen to the words of 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.

R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Psalm 89

“I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant:
Forever will I confirm your posterity
and establish your throne for all generations.” **R.**

Happy the people who know the joyful shout;
in the light of your countenance, O LORD, they walk.
At your name they rejoice all the day,
and through your justice they are exalted. **R.**

“He shall say of me, ‘You are my father,
my God, the Rock, my savior.’” **R.**

“Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him,
and my covenant with him stands firm.” **R.**

INTERCESSIONS

The leader says:

Let us ask for God's blessing on this Christmas manger and upon ourselves, that we who reflect on the birth of Jesus may share in the salvation he accomplished.

℟. Come, Lord, dwell with us.

Assisting leader:

For the Church of God, as we recall the circumstances surrounding the birth of Christ, that we may always proclaim his gift of new life for all people, we pray to the Lord. ℟.

Assisting leader:

For the world in which we live, that it may come to recognize Christ who was greeted by the angels and shepherds, we pray to the Lord. ℟.

Assisting leader:

For our families and our homes, that Christ who was laid in the manger may dwell with us always, we pray to the Lord. ℟.

Assisting leader:

For parents, that their love for their children may be modeled on that of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, we pray to the Lord. ℟.

After the intercessions the leader, in the following or similar words, invites all present to sing or say the Lord's Prayer.

Let us pray as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us:

All: Our Father...

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A member of the household says the prayer with hands folded.

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 up our thoughts to him,
who is God-with-us and Savior of all,
and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

℟. Amen.

May Christ our God enlighten our hearts and minds, now and forever.

℟. Amen.

