

NATIVITY SCENE PRAYER



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St. Francis of Assisi made the first Christmas crèche, or nativity scene, for Christmas Eve in 1223. Since then, communities from around the world have taken part in this important tradition, often incorporating local customs that remind us that Christ was born for the entire human family. Reflecting on the nativity scene can be a meaningful way for families to gather in prayer, mindful of the great joy in Christ that Advent points us toward.

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

During these weeks of Advent, we reflect upon this nativity scene and imagine the individuals present at the birth of Christ. We recognize kings and shepherds, young and old, men and women, rich and poor. We recognize God at work in humble, quiet places, calling each of us by name, together, to do God’s good work. We recognize that we are all called, as one human family, to be near to Christ and to one another.

READER: A reading from the Gospel of Luke (2:8-14)

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

LEADER: God of every nation and people, as we look upon this nativity scene, we see a family, not so unlike our own, not so unlike hundreds of thousands of families all around the world. We see that although this Holy Family came from poor and humble origins, they were surrounded and supported by people who traveled from distant parts of the world. And we see and remember that Christ enters our own life in hidden, unexpected ways, challenging us to reach across the world to whoever is in need of love and support.

God, bless all who gaze upon this nativity scene. As we look at this Holy Family, let us pray for all families—those we know, and those we do not; those who live on the other side of the world, and those who live on the other side of the street. Let us recognize and rejoice in the great diversity of the one family of God as we reflect on and give thanks for those diverse gifts present in our own family.

We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen