

Shorter Rite of Blessing of a Nativity Scene

The following is part of the official liturgy of the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church, but the Church actually says when the Nativity scene is set up in a 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:]

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord

All respond: Who made heaven and earth.

Leader: 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. *(Luke: 2:1-8)*

Leader: [A priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing with hands outstretched; a layperson says the prayer 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 up our thoughts to Him,
Who is God-with-us and Savior of all,
and Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All respond: Amen.

*Excerpted from the **Shorter Book of Blessings**, pp. 419-420 (NY: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1990). Approved for use in the United States by the USCCB and the Holy See.*