

### Prayer:

Almighty, most holy most high and supreme God, all good, supreme good, You Who alone are good, may we give back to You all praise, all glory, all grace, all honor, all blessing, and all good. So be it. So be it.

**All:** Amen.



St. Francis honored Our Divine Lord in a special and memorable way for people who were taking Christmas for granted.

Including animals for authenticity, St. Francis filled the manger which was used as the altar with hay. The Eucharist, placed on this manger-altar, caused many to see the Divine Infant held by St. Francis.

They realized Christ was among them. He was there just as He was in the stable in Bethlehem. Thus, many understood God's love is ever-present, and His presence all-loving.

By His coming so helpless, God showed he loves, respects, and trusts us. All were overwhelmed with love for an innocent child that early Christmas morning.

St. Francis hoped the crèche would serve as a reminder of all that Christmas should be, and what he began in Greccio in 1223 would become part of Christian tradition.

[From *Liturgy of the Hours & Office of the Passion of Francis of Assisi*:  
by Deacon Dave & Thérèse Ream, O.F.S., 3/2016, Revised July 2017]

## *Christmas Crèche and St. Francis of Assisi*



It is believed that St. Francis of Assisi created the very first crib scene in the year 1223. By gathering live animals and people in a stable to re-enact the first Christmas, he hoped to help the local townspeople better understand the poverty and love of Jesus. The Christ Child was lying on the hay in a manger between a live ox and a donkey. Legend has it that the Christ Child himself appeared in the manger to complete the scene.

**Ant.** Christ is born for us; come, let us adore him.

Sing for joy to God our help;  
with exultant voice raise to the Lord God  
living and true a shout of joy

Because the Lord is the Most High,  
the awesome, great King over all the earth.

For the most holy father of heaven,  
our King before all ages,  
sent from on high the beloved Son  
who was born of the Blessed Virgin, Holy Mary.

He called out to God: You are my Father,  
and God placed him as the firstborn,  
the highest above all earthly kings.

On that day the Lord sent mercy  
and song in the night.

This is the day the Lord had made;  
let us rejoice in it and be glad.

For to us is given the beloved child most holy,  
born for us along the way and placed in a manger  
because there was no room for him at the inn.

Glory to the Lord God in the highest  
and on earth peace to those of good will.

Let heavens rejoice and earth exult,  
let the sea and all that is in it roar,  
let fields and everything in them sing for joy.

Sing to the Lord a new song;  
sing to the Lord, all the earth!

For the Lord is great and highly to be praised;  
more awesome than all gods.

Bring to the Lord, families of nations,  
bring to the Lord glory and honor,  
bring to the Lord the glory due his name.

Cast off the weight of sin  
and take up the Lord's holy cross,  
follow the Lord's most holy commands to the very end.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit:

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

**Ant.** Christ is born for us; come, let us adore him.

**Reading:**

You are well acquainted with the favor shown you by our Lord Jesus Christ: how for our sake he made himself poor though he was rich, so that you might become rich by his poverty. (*2 Cor. 8:9*)

**Responsory:**

The Word was made Incarnate, Alleluia, Alleluia.

- The Word was made Incarnate, Alleluia, Alleluia.

He lived among us,

- The Word was made Incarnate, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

- The Word was made Incarnate, Alleluia, Alleluia.