



Blessed Trinity Catholic Community + Spirit of Christ Mission

Advent + Christmastime At Home

We echo the words of the disciples, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:10), as we strive to bring to God our joys and our sorrows, our hope and our fears in the ordinary day-to-day life of our faith. The heart of our belief is always “prayer:” personal quiet prayer, prayer as a couple or family, or with friends; prayer leading us always to the Great Prayer of the whole Church around the Sunday Table of the Lord.

The Second Vatican Council calls the home “the Domestic Church.” It is there that the love of God is first recognized; it is at home that we first turn to God in prayer, there that we learn the language of prayer and the virtues of Christian living.

These are prayers and actions for the CHURCH AT HOME. Prayer which invite us to remember what so many of us learned so long ago around the tables of our homes in moments of joy, sorrow, loss, and gain. These were “lessons,” rooted in love, which shaped our lives, our believing, and gave us reasons to hope, to believe and to gather again and again around the Lord’s Table.

Let us Pray...

CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

BLESSING OF AN ADVENT WREATH



The Advent wreath is made of four candles and a circle of branches. Before the first candle is lighted, the household gathers for the blessing.

All make the sign of the cross.

The Leader begins:

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All respond:

Who made heaven and earth.

The leader continues...

In the short days and long nights of Advent, we realize how we are always waiting for deliverance, always needing salvation by our God. Around this wreath, we shall remember God's promise.

The scripture is read:

Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

**The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.
You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing.**

The Word of the Lord

ALL: Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, all join in the LORD'S PRAYER.

Then the leader invites:

Let us know pray God's blessing upon us and upon this wreath.

After a short silence, the leader prays:

Lord our God,

we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:

**he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples, he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us,
he is the Savior of every nation.**

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath.

May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.

May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.



**The blessing may conclude with a verse from
"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

O come, desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of humankind;
bid ev'ry sad division cease and be thyself our Prince of peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.



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CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE



The use of the Christmas tree is relatively modern. Its origins are found in the medieval mystery plays that depicted the tree of paradise and the Christmas light or candle that symbolized Christ, the Light of the world. According to custom, the Christmas tree is set up just before Christmas and may remain in place until the Solemnity of Epiphany. The lights of the tree are illuminated after the prayer of blessing.

In the home the Christmas tree may be blessed by a parent or another family member, in connection with the evening meal just after the tree is decorated, and perhaps before the lights are turned); Families may choose to wait and bless the tree on Christmas Eve, Christmas morning or at another suitable time on Christmas Day. When all have gathered, a suitable song may be sung—an Advent or Christmas hymn

+ The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply “Amen.”

The leader may greet those present in the following words:

**Let us glorify Christ our light,
who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.
R/. Amen.**

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

My brothers and sisters, amidst signs and wonders Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea: his birth brings joy to our hearts and enlightenment to our minds. With this tree, decorated and adorned, may we welcome Christ among us; may its lights guide us to the perfect light.

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

A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel: 17:22, 23, 24 (NRSV)

**Thus says the Lord God: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar;
I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs...
I will plant it in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit
and become a noble cedar. ... All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord.**

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

The intercessions are then said. The leader says:

**Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this
sign of our faith in the Lord.**

R/. Lord, give light to our hearts.

**That this tree of lights may remind us of the tree of glory on which Christ accomplished our
salvation, let us pray to the
Lord. R/.**

**That the joy of Christmas may always be in our homes, let
us pray to the Lord. R/.**

**That the peace of Christ may dwell in our hearts and in the world,
let us pray to the Lord. R/.**

After the intercessions, the leader invites all present to pray

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

The leader says the prayer:

**Lord our God, we praise you for the light of creation:
the sun, the moon, and the stars of the night.
We praise you for the light of Israel:
the Law, the prophets, and the wisdom of the Scriptures.
We praise you for Jesus Christ, your Son:
he is Emmanuel, God-with-us, the Prince of Peace,
who fills us with the wonder of your love.**

**Lord God, let your blessing come upon us
as we illumine this tree.
May the light and cheer it gives be a sign of the joy
that fills our hearts.
May all who delight in this tree come to the knowledge
and joy of salvation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R/. Amen.**



The lights of the tree are then illuminated.

The leader concludes the rite with the sign of the cross, saying:

**May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever.
R/. Amen.**

*The blessing concludes with a verse from
"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*

**O come, thou dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night
and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.**



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Adaptation: Suggestion that blessing may occur when tree is decorated rather than waiting until Christmas Eve. Graphics added.

CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS MANGER OR NATIVITY SCENE



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.

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

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, [Luke 2:1](#) (lines 1-8) or [Isaiah 7:10](#) (lines 10-15, the birth of Emmanuel).

OR the following from the Prophet Isaiah

A Voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the Lord! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rugged land shall be made plain, the rough country a broad valley. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

(Isaiah 40: 3-5; Second Sunday of Advent B)

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

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.** (from the Book of Blessings)

R/. Amen.



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Adaptation; Addition of Isaiah 40:3-5. Graphics added.

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CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

THE “O ANTIPHONS” – DECEMBER 17-23



The final week of Advent—seven days before Christmas, the church prays the “O Antiphons.” If Advent is like the nighttime, these last days are like the hours before dawn. All nature is waiting for the sunrise. If Advent is like a woman’s pregnancy, now the baby is kicking in her womb. Soon the child will be born.

The last week of Advent is a time of special prayer. The church sings the “O Antiphons.” These are beautiful chants that are sung at Evening Prayer. There is an antiphon for each night from December 17 to December 23. They are called “O Antiphons” because each one begins with the word “O.” The antiphons include many of the titles of Christ, such as “Lord,” “lawgiver,” and “sun of justice.” The song “O come, O come Emmanuel” is a version of the “O Antiphons” that many people know and love. Companion to the Calendar (©1993 Archdiocese of Chicago)

On the last days of Advent, you may wish to add these “O Antiphons” to your evening prayer, your prayer at table (as part of your grace before the meal), or to your bedtime prayer.

December 17

O WISDOM of our God Most High,
Guiding creation with power and love:
Come to teach us the path of knowledge!

December 18

O LEADER of the House of Israel,
Giver of the law to Moses on Sinai:
Come to rescue us with your mighty power.

December 19

O ROOT of Jesse’s stem,
Sign of God’s love for all his people:
Come to save us without delay!

December 20

O KEY of David,
Opening the gates of God’s eternal Kingdom:
Come and free the prisoners of darkness!

December 21 (the winter solstice)

O RADIANT DAWN,
Splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
Come and shine on those who dwell
In darkness and in the shadow of death.

December 22

O KING of all nations
and keystone of the Church:
Come and save humankind,
whom you have formed from the dust.

December 23

O EMMANUEL, our King
and Giver of the Law:
Come to save us, Lord our God!



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PRAYER AT HOME ON CHRISTMAS EVE



For most of us the memories of Christmas Eve are strong, loving and joy filled. As children, we remember, the night was magical, filled with anticipation and even a bit of anxiety! Advent was a time of waiting, but Christmas Eve seemed to be an even longer “wait!” For many the night found us in Church for Midnight Mass, or perhaps at an earlier time in the evening. Our Christmas Eve “wait” often included Christmas Mass in the darkness as we witnessed “the Lord of the universe and the light of the world, wrapped in swaddling clothes, Savior of all, lying in a manger.” That sense of “waiting” in an important value. In the silent watches of the night, the Lord of all, King of the Universe, leapt from the heavens and made his home among us.

This year, for many of us, it is not possible to gather for Christmas Mass due to COVID-19. Still Christmas Eve touches our heart and fills our memory. On that night, as family, couples, friends, or even if alone, we find ourselves in our “domestic church;” a place of prayer in which the Savior for whom we wait is present. This is a night for prayer and worship in our home. A night, if not already done, to begin a new Christmas memory.

Before bedtime gather all in the household around the family creche. Dim the room lighting. If you can safely light some candles do so. When all are gathered begin by singing the first verse of O Come all ye Faithful. Following the hymn, someone prays aloud the following prayer:

Leader: Let us pray (*period of silence*)

**God of midnight’s (nighttime’s) deepest silence
and heaven’s brightest glory,
whose radiant majesty angelic choirs praise
and whose hidden glory lowly shepherds adore,
your grace has appeared, bringing salvation to all,
in a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.**

**Upon the deep darkness of our world
shine the light of your countenance
that our hearts may exult and sing for joy at the Savior’s coming,
with angels and shepherds, with Mary and Joseph,
and with all people of good will who long for your peace and justice.**

**We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us,
your Son who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. AMEN**

From the revised prayers of the Italian Roman Catholic Revised Roman Missal Collects, Midnight Mass,
published in Prayers for Sundays and Seasons ©1998 Archdiocese of Chicago, Peter J. Scagnelli, ed. All Rights Reserved.

Following the Prayer, there may be a brief SILENCE, then all may join in singing an ALLELUIA refrain (one you remember from Mass), as an acclamation to the Gospel of Luke.

Alleluia!

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.

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 Christ 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.

R:/ Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

The Alleluia may be repeated....

Alleluia!



Following the sung Alleluia, persons may share what the Gospel means to them. Then all may offer a **prayer for others** on this night. For those who are alone, for the sick, for children who are not cared for, for all who suffer this night in any way, or for any other special prayers or needs. After each spoken intention the leader says, "LET US PRAY TO THE LORD," and all respond, "LORD, HEAR US!"

Then all pray together THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Following the "Our Father," all join in singing **SILENT NIGHT**. At the conclusion of the hymn **each person blesses the other with the mark of the "seal" of the Cross on the forehead**. When completed bid one another a **MERRY CHRISTMAS** and continue the prayer with good Food and Drink.



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CHRISTMAS DINNER TABLE BLESSING

Christmas dinner is always a special time. The Christmas meal reflects the wonder and beauty of God's word becoming flesh among us. Christ, born anew, having "leapt from the heavens in the darkest hour of the night" is truly present, especially "at table." As we gather for this special meal, it is unlike previous Christmas dinners. Some ordinarily present are not at this table due to the "COVID-19 pandemic." Others are absent because they have found their way to the eternal banquet in heaven. Nevertheless, in ways filled with wonder and mystery, they are still among us, in heart, spirit and memory. **This table blessing prayer could be repeated through the Days of Christmas, especially on Sundays.**



When all is ready and when all are gathered (standing) around the Table, a CHRISTMAS CANDLE may be lighted as the leader says:

Glory to God in the highest

All respond:

AND PEACE TO GOD'S PEOPLE ON EARTH.

All then join in singing a verse of O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL!

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL, JOYFUL AND TRIUMPHANT

O COME YE, O COME YE TO BETHLEHEM;

COME AND BEHOLD HIM, BORN THE KING OF ANGELS.

O COME, LET US ADORE HIM, O COME LET US ADORE HIM,

O COME LET US ADORE HIM, CHRIST THE LORD.

The leader prays...

Lord Jesus, in the peace of this season our spirits rejoice:

With the beasts and angels, the shepherds and stars,

with Mary and Joseph we sing God's praise.

By your coming may the hungry be filled with good things,

and may our table and home be blessed.

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Glory to God in the highest:

All respond:

AND PEACE TO GOD'S PEOPLE ON EARTH!

If persons are not yet seated at table, they take their place at this time.

A person selected beforehand then says:

Let us listen to the words of the Holy Gospel according to John:

All may sing an ALLELUIA

The reader then continues:

AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH

AND MADE HIS DWELLING AMONG US, AND WE SAW HIS GLORY,

THE GLORY AS OF THE FATHER'S ONLY SON, FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH.

The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

The sung ALLELUIA may be repeated.

The leader then says:

Lift up your hearts!

All respond:

WE LIFT THEM UP TO THE LORD!

The leader then prays:

**God of greatness, in love you give us this Christmas Feast
to be our joy and delight! Hold us close to each other.
Unite us in spirit with those who have died and with those who are distant.
Hear our prayer and gather all your children in Bethlehem,
where we will join with Mary and Joseph, with the angels,
with the shepherds, with the cattle and the sheep,
and with all the stars of heaven in singing your praise:
Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth, now and forever more.
AMEN.**

The leader then says, together we bless our meal:

**BLESS US, O LORD, AND THESE THY GIFTS
WHICH WE ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE FROM YOUR GOODNESS
THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.**

Dinner is then served.

*At the end of the meal, all may join in a verse of
Joy to the world:*

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come,
Let earth receive her king
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing!**



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CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

BLESSING PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

On New Year's Eve or New Year's Day, the household gathers at the table or at the Christmas tree or manger scene. Many people make New Year Day a day of prayer for peace. On New year day we also celebrate the solemn feast of Mary, Mother of the Lord.

All make the sign of the cross. The leader begins:

Let us praise the Lord of days and seasons and years, saying:
Glory to God in the highest!

R/. And peace to his people on earth!



The leader may use these or similar words to introduce the blessing:

Our lives are made of days and nights, of seasons and years,
for we are part of a universe of suns and moons and planets.
We mark ends and we make beginnings and, in all, we
praise God for the grace and mercy that fill our days.

Then the Scripture is read, Book of Genesis 1:14-19:

Listen to the words of the Book of Genesis:

God said: "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the fixed times, the days and the years, and serve as luminaries in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth." And so it happened: God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night; and he made the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was. Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

*After a time of silence, members of the household offer prayers of thanksgiving for the past year, and of intercession for the year to come. On January 1, it may be appropriate to conclude these prayers with a **Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary** since this is the solemn feast of Mary, Mother of God.*

A LITANY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Leader: Lord, have mercy; ALL: LORD, HAVE MERCY.

Leader: Christ, have mercy; ALL: CHRIST, HAVE MERCY.

Leader: Lord, have mercy; ALL: LORD, HAVE MERCY

Leader: God our Father in heaven; ALL: have mercy on us.

Leader: God the Son, Redeemer of the world: ALL: have mercy on us.

Leader: God, the Holy Spirit: ALL: have mercy on us.

Following each invocation, all say "PRAY FOR US."

HOLY MARY; HOLY MOTHER OF GOD; MOTHER OF CHRIST; MOTHER OF THE CHURCH;
MODEL OF MOTHERHOOD; MOTHER OF GOOD COUNSEL; MOTHER OF OUR SAVIOR; VIRGIN MOST WISE;
VIRGIN RIGHTLY PRAISED; VIRGIN MOST RENOWNED; MIRROR OF JUSTICE; THRONE OF WISDOM;
CAUSE OF OUR JOY; SHRINE OF THE SPIRIT; MYSTICAL ROSE; ARK OF THE COVENANT; GATE OF HEAVEN;
MORNING STAR; COMFORT OF THE TROUBLED; HELP OF CHRISTIANS;
QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS; QUEEN ASSUMED INTO HEAVEN; QUEEN OF FAMILIES; QUEEN OF PEACE.

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **ALL: Have mercy on us.**
Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **ALL: Have mercy on us.**
Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world; **ALL: Grant us Peace.**
Leader: Pray for us, Holy Mother of God. That we may become worthy of the promises of Christ.
(based on the Litany of Loreto, adapted.)

All join hands for the Lord's Prayer.

Then the leader continues:

Let us now pray for God's blessing in the new year.
After a short silence, parents may place their hands on their children in blessing as the leader says:
Remember us, O God; from age to age be our comforter.
You have given us the wonder of time, blessings in days and nights, seasons and years.
Bless your children at the turning of the year and fill the months ahead
with the bright hope that is ours in the coming of Christ.
You are our God, living and reigning, forever and ever.
R/. Amen.

Another prayer for peace may be said:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
R/. Amen.
—Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi



The leader says:

Let us bless the Lord.
All respond, making the sign of the cross:
Thanks be to God.

The prayer may conclude with the singing of a Christmas carol.



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CATHOLIC HOUSEHOLD BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

BLESSING OF THE HOME AND HOUSEHOLD ON THE FEAST OF EPIPHANY

The traditional date of Epiphany is January 6, but in the United States it is celebrated on the Sunday between January 2 and January 8.

When all have gathered, a suitable song may be sung. The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply, "Amen."

The leader greets those present in the following words:

Let us praise God, who fills our hearts and homes with peace.

Blessed be God forever.

R/. Blessed be God forever.



In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling place among us. It is Christ who enlightens our hearts and homes with his love. May all who enter this home find Christ's light and love.

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example, Luke 19:1-9:

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

Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way.> When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham."

Intercessions are then prayed:

Leader: The Son of God made his home among us. With thanks and praise let us call upon him.

R/. Stay with us, Lord.

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, with Mary and Joseph you formed the Holy Family: remain in our home, that we may know you as our guest and honor you as our Head.

We pray:

R/. Stay with us, Lord.

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, you had no place to lay your head, but in the spirit of poverty accepted the hospitality of your friends: grant that through our help the homeless may obtain proper housing.

We pray:

R/. Stay with us, Lord.

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, the three kings presented their gifts to you in praise and adoration: grant that those living in this house may use their talents and abilities to your greater glory.

We pray:

R/. Stay with us, Lord.

After the intercessions, the leader invites all present to say

The Lord's Prayer.

The leader then says the prayer of blessing:

Lord God of heaven and earth,
you revealed your only-begotten Son to every nation
by the guidance of a star.

Bless this house and all who inhabit it.
Fill them (us) with the light of Christ,
that their (our) concern for others may reflect your love.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May Christ Jesus dwell with us,
keep us from all harm,
and make us one in mind and heart,
now and forever.

R/. Amen.



It is preferable to end the celebration with a suitable song, for example, “O Come, All Ye Faithful” or “We Three Kings.”



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