

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 on the Vigil of Christmas or at another suitable time on Christmas Day, when possible.

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

Response: (R/.) Amen.

Leader: Let us glorify Christ our light, who brings salvation and peace into our midst, now and forever.

R/. Amen.

Leader: 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.

Reader: A reading from the book of Ezekiel.

Thus says the Lord God: I, too, will pluck from the crest of the cedar the highest branch.

From the top a tender shoot I will break off and transplant on a high, lofty mountain.

On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it.

It shall put forth branches and bear fruit and become a majestic cedar.

Every small bird will nest under it, all kinds of winged birds will dwell in the shade of its branches.

Every tree of the field will know that I am the Lord.

I bring low the high tree, lift high the lowly tree, wither up the green tree, and make the dry tree bloom.

As I, the Lord, have spoken, so will I do!

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

R/. Thanks be to God.

Leader: Let us ask God to send his blessing upon us and upon this sign of our faith in the Lord. Our response is, Lord, give light to our hearts.

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/. Lord, give light to our hearts.**

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

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

All: Our Father...

Leader: 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.

Leader: May the God of glory fill our hearts with peace and joy, now and forever. **(All make the sign of the cross)**

R/. Amen.

All sing this 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.