

Bambinelli Sunday Blessing

*God our Father,
you loved us so much
you sent us your only Son, Jesus,
born of the Virgin Mary,
to save us and lead us back to you.*

*We pray that, with your blessing,
these images of Jesus might be
a sign of your presence and love
in our homes.*



*Good Father,
give your blessing
to all who gather with us this Christmas,
family and friends.*

*Open our hearts,
that we might receive Jesus in joy,
do always what he asks of us
and see him in those who need our love.*



*We ask this in the name of Jesus,
your beloved Son,
who came to give peace to the world.
You who live and reign forever and
ever.
Amen.*

Origins of Bambinelli Sunday

St. John Paul II began a tradition early on in his papacy where he invited the children of Rome to assemble in St. Peter's Square on the Third Sunday of Advent during his Angelus address. He asked them to bring their little statue of the baby Jesus that would be placed in their Nativity set at home.

John Paul II blessed the figurines of those present and told them to assemble before the manger scene with their family in a spirit of prayer.

As I bless your little statues, beloved children, I think with serene hope of you, of the immense good that you can do, precisely because you are little, within your family, the school, the Associations, and society itself. Not for nothing did Jesus himself choose you as models for those who wish to have a part in his Kingdom (cf. Mt 18:4; Mk 10: 15). Take home, with great care, the little statue of the Infant Jesus, also as a sign of the Pope's love for you and your families. Put it in your Crib with intense faith, with that faith wherewith the Blessed Virgin, the Mother



of God, laid the new-born Jesus in the manger (cf. Lk 2:7). Invite your father, your mother, your brothers and sisters, the whole of your family, to gather round the Crib in these days of the Christmas Novena, to recite together the prayers learned on your mother's lap, to sing the

sweet carols, so charged with human and Christian sentiment. May the Infant Jesus, present in the Crib of your home, be the concrete sign of a limpid and sincere faith, which will enlighten, guide and direct your life and that of your dear ones.

Both Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have continued the tradition, and in recent years it has started to expand to other places outside of Rome.

It is a beautiful Advent tradition, one that sanctifies the home with the baby Jesus and makes his arrival in the manger scene an even more joyous event.