

Celebrating St. Francis' Christmas at Greccio 1223-2023

In celebration of the Centenaries and the focus on Christmas at Greccio for 1223-2023, the simple exercise provided here will serve as a reflective and meditative sharing experience of what we Franciscans are identifying with at this particular stage of our journey.

Items Needed:

One Nativity Scene (Large Fraternities should have extra pieces available – but only one Holy Family)

Two Tables (One empty and one decorated – see below)

A handout of “Oh Come, Emmanuel” or other appropriate hymn; OFS Ritual w/marker pp.97-98

Step One:

Place one table which is decorated with a covering and pine garland at the head of the room. (Optional include a small mound of straw or stable)

Place one table with several pieces of a Nativity Scene in no specific order a few feet away from the decorated table.

Step Two:

Invite members to select a piece of the Nativity scene that they are identifying with at this particular time in their life. They may share why they chose that particular piece. They will then place it on the decorated table as they begin to create a beautiful Creche scene.

Step Three:

After Creche scene is complete, all members sing a seasonal hymn which is followed by silence and meditation and/or recite St. Francis Psalm 15 – OFS Ritual pp. 97-98.

Helpful ideas:

- *Try to have your tables set up before members arrive*
- *Decorated table can be decorated with candles or you can create your own ideas*
- *Make sure everyone gets a hymn handout*
- *Explain what is going to happen during this exercise*
- *Have your Minister or a Council Member start it off to get your members “warmed up”*
- *Some people are shy so if need be, volunteers may finish arranging the Creche scene*

Submitted by Israela Garcia, OFS – Task Force Member