



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF WORSHIP

Memo

To: Pastors
From: James Cavanagh, Director
Date: December 3, 2019
Re: Nativity Scene

"If the manger is set up in the church, it must not be placed in the presbyterium [i.e. sanctuary]. A place should be chosen that is suitable for prayer and devotion and is easily accessible by the faithful." - Book of Blessings, no. 1544

St Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first nativity scene in 1223 when he made a live nativity scene for the townspeople to help them better celebrate Christmas. A nativity scene is a beautiful devotion, but because it is *devotional* and not an object of worship it should not be placed in front of the altar or anywhere in the sanctuary proper. Instead, it should be placed off to the side or some other place where people can see it easily, and that is conducive to prayer.

Please don't hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions or concerns regarding these guidelines.

Blessings and peace in Christ,

James Cavanagh
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