

## A very Franciscan Christmas

### THE FIRST CHRISTMAS CRIB

Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas and readying ourselves for the celebration of Jesus' birth. One of the first items to appear in our homes and workplaces during the Advent season is the Christmas nativity scene.

The very first Nativity scene is attributed to St Francis of Assisi. In Greccio (origin of the word creche)

*Francis transformed one of the natural caves of the mountain into a chapel, and in that little space, he created a manger filled with straw. He brought in the ox and ass and lit the hillside with torches so that the people from the region would see the mountain filled with light ... At midnight a priest came forward to celebrate the Christmas mass beside the manger ... Francis created in a beautiful poetic tableau, a vision of the incarnation that touched the hearts of people as never before and gave to the world the beautiful tradition of the Christmas Creche*

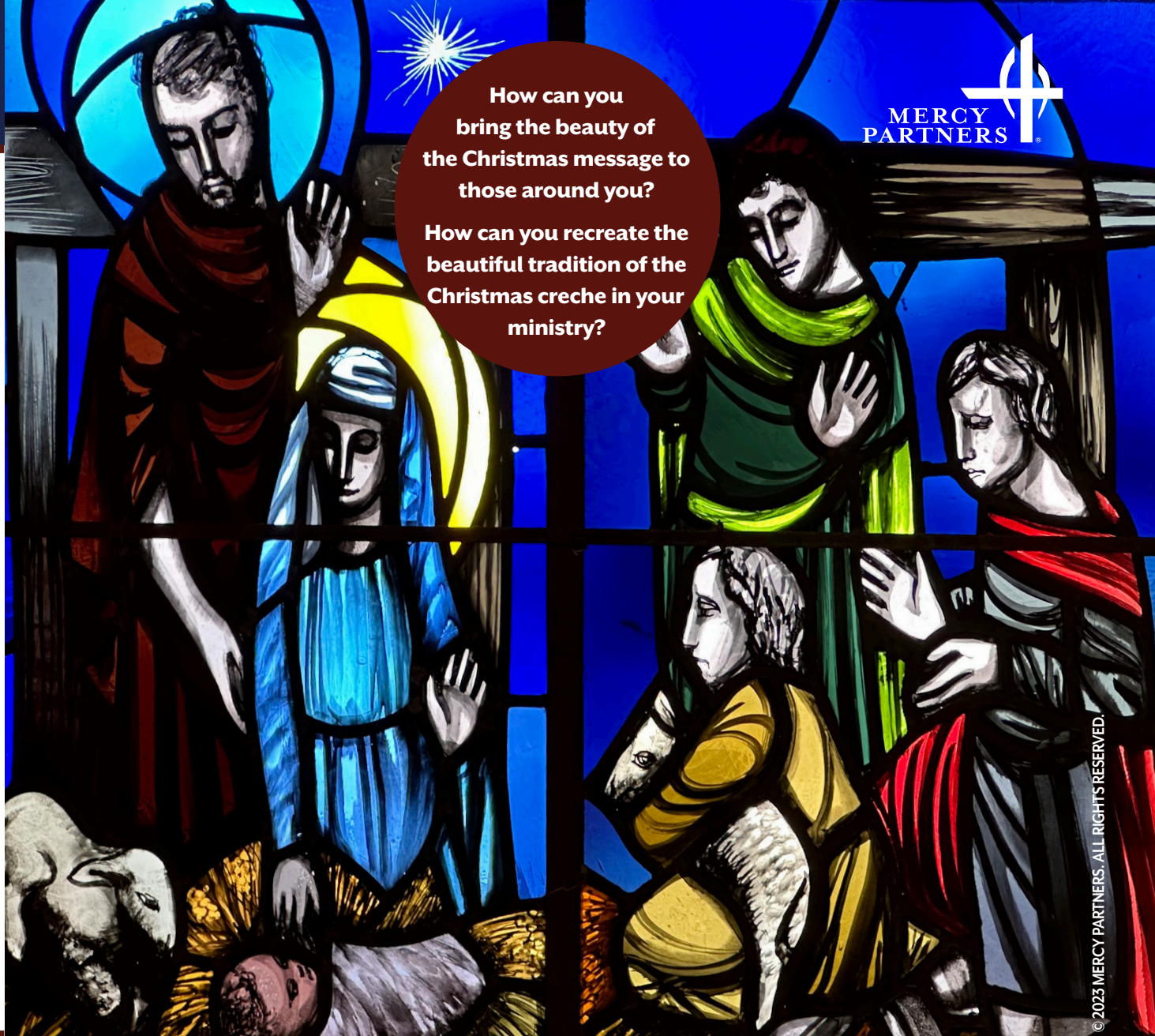
(Stets OSF. 2022. *Franciscan Feld Guide: Franciscan Places, Practices and Prayers*. Franciscan Media: Cincinnati. 37).

**St. Francis was intent on having people see,  
smell, and touch the amazing impact of  
God's Incarnation in our lives**

(Accessed 26/08/2023 at <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/franciscan-spirit-blog/>).

How can you  
bring the beauty of  
the Christmas message to  
those around you?

How can you recreate the  
beautiful tradition of the  
Christmas creche in your  
ministry?



*Holy One, Essence of Kindness*

*As we journey through this Advent Season inspire us to be bearers of love,  
through our messages of hope, our shared smiles, our generosity  
our forgiving hearts, our listening ears and our words of understanding.  
Help us to be living signs of your love dwelling amongst us. Amen*

(Adapted from: Joyce Rupp. *Return to the Root*. 2021. 225).