

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
TO THE DONORS OF THE CRIB AND THE CHRISTMAS TREE IN ST. PETER'S  
SQUARE**

*Paul VI Audience Hall*

*9 December 2016*

[Link](#)

[...] The Nativity scene in Saint Peter's Square, created by artist Manwel Grech of Gozo, portrays the Maltese countryside, and integrates the traditional Maltese cross and the *luzzu*, a typical Maltese sea vessel, which also recalls the sad and tragic reality of seafaring migrants making their way toward Italy. In the painful experience of these brothers and sisters, we are reminded that at the moment of baby Jesus' birth, he found no shelter at the inn and instead was born in a stable in Bethlehem. He was later taken to Egypt to escape the threat of Herod. Those who visit this Nativity scene will be invited to rediscover its symbolic value, which is a message of fraternity, sharing, welcome and solidarity. Nativity scenes in churches, homes and many public places are also an invitation to make room in our lives and in society for God, hidden in the faces of so many people confronting hardship, poverty and suffering. [...]