



Las Posadas

A prayer for our brother and sister migrants and refugees.

Advent 2019

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A Posada tells the story of Mary and Joseph searching for a safe place for Mary to give birth to the baby Jesus. In Mexico, Posadas are celebrated from December 16 to December 24. Traditionally, participants pray the Rosary and sing Christmas carols. The closing song "Canto para pedir Posada" ('Song to ask for shelter') recreates an imagined conversation between Joseph and an innkeeper. Joseph explains that he and his wife need a place to stay for the night, and the innkeeper initially refuses.

Las Posadas presents the struggles that Mary and Joseph encountered as strangers in another country, situations that are familiar to many of our brother and sister migrants in their day-to-day life, as they are discriminated against, rejected, and abused. Let us keep in mind all migrants and refugees who are running away from violence, poverty and climate change as we pray The Seven Dolors of Mary, a tradition within the Holy Cross Family.

Customarily in Mexico, the prayer service is repeated over nine nights in different homes and ends with the host family offering food. A shorter version of Las Posadas is presented here.

Leader

Gracious God, no one is stranger to you, and no one is far from your love. In your goodness, protect migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; take care of those separated from their families and loved ones, watch over those who are lost and exiled from their land. Amen.

The prophecy of Simeon

"And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted and you yourself a sword will pierce so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.'" *Luke 2, 34-35.*

Silent Reflection

Prayer

We pray for people around the world, forced to leave their homelands due to exclusion, lack of economic opportunity, conflict, climate change, or threats of violence.

Personal Petitions, followed by one Hail Mary

A Language of the Heartⁱ (verse 1)

I do not speak your native tongue; I do not know your ways, your customs, your creed, the things that you believe; I never learned.

The flight into Egypt

“When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.’ Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt.” *Matt. 2, 13-14.*

Silent Reflection

Prayer

We pray for all migrants and refugees around the world who must flee in fear and despair, with no place to go. We also pray for the leaders of countries that they might find the wisdom to see the value of all persons.

Personal Petitions, followed by one Hail Mary

A Language of the Heart (verse 2)

Your skin’s a different color; Your God has a different name; It’s easy to see how someone could believe that you and I, we’re not the same.

The loss of the Child Jesus in the temple

“After they had completed [the festival’s] days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.” *Luke 2, 43-45.*

Silent Reflection

Prayer

We pray for those who have been forcibly separated from their families, whose loved ones live in desperate hope they will be reunited once more. We also pray for the

conversion of hearts of those who would harm others, that they find the grace to recognize and respect human life.

Personal Petitions, followed by one Hail Mary

A Language of the Heart (verse 3)

But then I saw you smiling as the sun rose in the sky; And I saw the tears you wept as you watched your loved one die. And when I heard your children singing, they sounded much like mine; Somehow, I knew we weren't that different after all.

The meeting of Jesus and Mary on the way of the Cross

"A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him." *Luke 23, 27.*

Silent Reflection

Prayer

We pray for our brothers and sisters in transit to other countries, suffering hunger, cold and violence, and for those who take compassion on them, standing for justice and peace.

Personal Petitions, followed by one Hail Mary

A Language of the Heart (verse 4)

There is a language of the heart we all can understand. That reaches cross the boundaries, of all peoples and all lands. The deepest things we know by heart when all is said and done. It's a language of the heart can make us friends, can make us one.

The Crucifixion

"Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home." *John 19, 25-27.*

Silent Reflection

Prayer

We pray for migrants and refugees abused in countries of reception. May God touch the hearts of leaders of nations so they may use their power to help them.

Personal Petitions, followed by one Hail Mary

A Language of the Heart (verse 5)

I dream of peace and harmony; I imagine days to come; when war disappears and friendship draws near, to bind up age-old wounds. I've heard that love changes everything; I believe that it's true, don't you? If I reach out my hand, will you take it? Then let's stand, for all that's right and just and true.

Jesus taken down from the cross

"After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body." *John 19, 38.*

Silent Reflection

Prayer

We pray for those who have died trying to cross borders in pursuit of a better life—many of whom remain unidentified—and for those who work on the borders and government institutions that attend to migrants. May they respond compassionately to our brothers and sisters.

Personal Petitions, followed by one Hail Mary

A Language of the Heart (verse 6)

But then I saw you smiling as the sun rose in the sky; And I saw the tears you wept as you watched your loved one die. And when I heard your children singing, they sounded much like mine; Somehow, I knew we weren't that different after all.

The burial of Jesus

"Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by." *John 19, 41-42.*

Silent Reflection

Prayer

We pray for mothers mourning loved ones who have died on the journey, that they find strength and comfort in God's love and compassion.

Personal Petitions, followed by one Hail Mary

A Language of the Heart (verse 7)

There is a language of the heart we all can understand. That reaches cross the boundaries, of all peoples and all lands. The deepest things we know by heart when all is said and done. It's a language of the heart can make us friends, can make us one.

Leader—Final prayer

“In prayerful hope, and through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Way, we invoke God’s abundant blessings upon all the world’s migrants and refugees and upon all those who accompany them on their journey.”ⁱⁱ



"Canto para pedir Posada" ("Song to ask for shelter") [traditional]

The verses of the song are sung alternately by those outside (Joseph) and those inside (Innkeeper) the home. Those outside sing the words of Joseph requesting shelter for the night. The people within respond, singing the part of the innkeeper who says there is no room. Just before the final verse, the door is opened and those outside enter the home while everyone sings the final verse together.

Joseph

*En el nombre del
cielo
os pido posada,
pues no puede andar
mi esposa amada.*

In the name of
heaven
I ask you for shelter,
for my beloved wife
can go no farther.

Innkeeper

*Aquí no es mesón
sigan adelante,
yo no puedo abrir,
no sea algún
tunante.*

This is not an inn
get on with you;
I cannot open the
door;
you might be a
rogue.

Joseph

*No seas inhumano,
tennos caridad, que
el Dios de los cielos te
lo premiará.*

Do not be inhuman,
show some charity,
God in heaven will
reward you.

*Venimos rendidos
desde Nazaret,
yo soy carpintero
de nombre José.*

We are worn out
all the way from
Nazareth,
I am a carpenter
named Joseph.

*Posada te pide,
amado casero
por sólo una noche
la Reina del Cielo.*

We request lodging,
dear innkeeper,
for only one night
for the Queen of
Heaven.

*Mi esposa es María.
es Reina del Cielo,
y madre va a ser
del Divino Verbo.*

My wife is Mary.
She is the Queen of
Heaven,
she will be mother
to the Divine Word.

Innkeeper

*Ya se pueden ir
y no molestar
porque si me enfado
los voy a apalear.*

You may go now
and don't bother us
anymore
because if I get angry
I will beat you.

*No me importa el
nombre,
déjenme dormir,
pues ya les digo
que no hemos de
abrir.*

Never mind your
name,
let me sleep,
I've already told you
we won't open the
door.

*Pues si es una Reina
quien lo solicita
¿Cómo es que, de
noche,
anda tan solita?*

If she is a queen
who is asking
why is it that she's
out at night,
wandering so alone.

Joseph

*Dios pague señores
vuestra caridad,
y que os colme el
cielo
de felicidad.*

May the Lord reward
you
for your charity,
and may the sky be
filled
with happiness.

At this point in the song, the door is opened and those outside enter as all sing the final verse.

TODOS:

*Entren santos peregrinos
Peregrinos, reciban este rincón,
Aunque es pobre la morada,
Os la doy de corazón.*

Innkeeper

*¿Eres tú José?
¿Tu esposa es María?
Entren, peregrinos,
no los conocía.*

Is that you Joseph?
Your wife is Mary?
Enter pilgrims
I didn't recognize
you.

*Dichosa la casa
que abriga este día
a la Virgen Pura la
hermosa María.*

Happy home,
harboring on this day
the pure virgin, the
beautiful Mary.

ALL:

Enter holy pilgrims.
Pilgrims, receive this corner, even it is poor.
I give it from my heart.



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ⁱ Kathleen Sherman, CSJ. "A Language of the Heart." Used with permission.

ⁱⁱ Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 29 September 2019.