

La Posadas

La Posadas (Spanish for the inns) is a re-enactment by villagers of the search by Mary and Joseph for an inn or shelter where Jesus could be born.

Advent 1 - The Gates of the Temple in Jerusalem

Joseph: Hello. My name is Joseph. We need a place for the night. Do you think you could help us?

Pilgrim: Well, there is plenty of room here if you want to camp out for the night. Many pilgrims sleep here at the temple gates. Are you pilgrims?

Joseph: No, not exactly pilgrims. But we are seekers. My wife is pregnant and about to give birth. We are anxious to see our child. And, like many, we have been waiting for him for a long time. We have been told he will be very special.

Pilgrim: All children are special. I had a child once, only one. She died a long time ago. Sometimes though it almost seems like yesterday.

Joseph: You have had a great loss. The child to be born knows a lot about loss. We have been told that he will be the cause of the rise and the fall of many, and that his mother will know great grief because of him.

Pilgrim: The rise and fall of many? That sounds a bit unsettling. I wouldn't say that too loudly even here. Herod's agents are everywhere. It could be rather dangerous for you.

Joseph: We know something about danger, having travelled all this way alone and only on a donkey. We are not afraid.

Pilgrim: Well, you should be. Even the walls have ears. And did you say that your wife is about to give birth? That's not so good either. The temple authorities will be upset, and we will all have to go through extended purification afterwards. I am beginning to feel rather uncomfortable about this.

Joseph: Any place will do...a corner, a small room.

Pilgrim: No, no. My mind is quite made up. I think you should move along. This isn't quite the place for you. No definitely not. Move along please.

Advent 2 – The Doorstep of Caesar’s Palace

Joseph: We are cold and hungry, and my wife is pregnant and about to deliver a child. Can you give us a room for the night?

Palace Guard: No one is allowed into the palace gates except by appointment and only on Thursdays between one and four.

Joseph: We have no appointment, but we also have no place to stay. The baby is coming, and we need a room.

Palace Guard: The only babies that are born here are those who are heirs to the throne, and even they are suspect. Is this child an heir?

Joseph: Well, he knows something about power, so the angel told me. His name will be Jesus, and he will be called the Prince of Peace.

Palace Guard: We already have a Prince of Peace. Caesar has done more to bring peace to our world than anyone before him. We hardly need another Messiah. Besides, you look more like peasants than royalty.

Joseph: It’s true. I have worked hard all my life. I don’t understand why this child will be born to us, but his time is at hand, and we need shelter. We’d be happy to pay, but we have no money. His mother does sing a song that might do, however.

Palace Guard: A song might be nice. What’s it about?

Joseph: It’s the song she sang in her heart when the angel announced she was to have this child. It’s a song of praise to God whose mercy is great, who scatters the proud, brings down the powerful, sends the rich away empty, and remembers the lowly and hungry. It’s quite beautiful.

Palace Guard: You would dare to sing such a song outside of Caesar’s Palace? You’re not only poor, you are foolish. I can see now that this is hardly the place for you. As I say, no one is allowed into the palace gates except by appointment and only on Thursdays between one and four. Clear off now! I’ve more important matters to attend to.

Advent 3 – The Gatehouse to a Large Estate

Joseph: Hello, hello! Is anybody there? We come looking for shelter.

Estate Agent: Who’s there? You, do I know you? You look like a wanderer. We do not make provision for the likes of you.

Joseph: My name is Joseph, and I am travelling with my wife, Mary. She is going to give birth, and we need shelter.

Estate Agent: The main house is quite a ways up the road. It’s locked tight, and the dogs are out. You’d never make it, and no one would be home to call the dogs off. His Lordship, you see, is currently away at his villa on the coast.

Joseph: But you are here. Could you not let us into the gatehouse? The time grows short,

and Mary's hour is beginning.

Estate Agent: Me? Let you in? I am only a slave. I do what I am told. I keep the gates closed and let no one in. I safeguard the property. I wish I could help you, but someday, if I can work here long enough to pay off my debts and get my land back, I hope to be free. That won't happen if I fall down on the job.

Joseph: Debts are a heavy burden, and many are weighed down by them. But the child Mary is carrying will have a lot to say about debts and about forgiving them, and even about forgiving debtors. Joy and a softening of the heart shall be his gift to us all when we behold his face.

Estate Agent: What foolish nonsense! No child can do anything about debts. Of course there is joy when a new child is born, but then reality eventually hits home. We all have to make our own way in the world, no ifs, ands, or buts. Life is hard, and I don't intend to make my life any harder by letting you in. Be off with you, and good night!

Advent 4 – The Lobby of an Inn

Joseph: Hello! Hello! Is the manager here?

Innkeeper: I am the innkeeper. Hang on. I'll be right there.

Joseph: I need a room for the night. We are out of options and will take anything.

Innkeeper: Look around you. The place is packed. There's not a room left in the place, and I've just about run out of wine. The crowd is getting ugly. Do yourself a favour and go somewhere else.

Joseph: There is nowhere else. My wife is in labour, and we need a place now.

Innkeeper: No room. No room. That's it. Can't say I'm not pleased. All this fuss about coming home to pay taxes is good for the old pocketbook. And what other occasion except a funeral would bring all my cousins together for a visit? Taxes and death, don't you know. Taxes and death. But still, there is no room. Can't help you.

Joseph: But the child is coming. He at least should not be left out in the cold. His life matters more than you realize. The angel told me about it in a dream.

Innkeeper: I know, I know. The life of every child matters, but you've caught me on a bad night.

Joseph: But this child is God's child, God's only son. There is no night like tonight for him to be born. This time will only come once on the face of the earth, nor will you ever see his like again in living memory.

Innkeeper: I really am very sorry. Listen, go next door. The next guy over has a stable out back that might do. It's not a great place to have a baby, but you'll be warm with the animals—if you don't mind the camels spitting on you once in a while. And anyway, you'll probably be safer with them than you would with this crowd

tonight. Go on...if he gives you trouble, I'll put in a good word for you. Go on with you!

Christmas: Late Night Shopping on Christmas Eve

Joseph: We saw the Christmas display in your store window, and all the lights were on.

Manager: Come in, come in! I have everything you could ever want for Christmas right here: Pokemon and Polly Pocket and Potato Heads galore. You name it, we've got it.

Joseph: No. You don't understand. I am Joseph, and this is Mary. She is about to give birth, and we need a place to stay.

Manager: Joseph and Mary! Really? What a scream! In my store—imagine! But hey, this could be a real break. Imagine the promotional opportunities! This could be great for business.

Joseph: Your business and mine are not necessarily the same. This has to do with God and God's business. My concern is with the child and his mother. The child will not wait any longer. Will you let us in?

Manager: Well, at least let me call in a news crew. Think of the royalties you'll make when you sell your story. You look like you could really use the money. And what a hit you will be, splashed all over the news. I can just picture it now—guest appearances and limos and paparazzi. You'll be stars, and we'll all make a bundle.

Joseph: This birth is not about money. It is about the heart. Just that. The heart. The child to be born is from the heart of God, and is the son of God—Jesus. He is not here to bring money, but peace and joy and hope and love, even to you, if you let him.

Manager: Those sound nice. Especially the love part. I could use a little of that. Here I am, Christmas Eve, working my tail off, not even able to be with my kids. Sometimes I'm not sure what the point of it all is. Honestly, I can't even remember the last time I really enjoyed doing this, but it is all that I have and the thought of all that money, it has its appeal. In the end, what could be more important than that?

Joseph: The love of this child will be more important than anything you know. He will bring joy even to you and will lighten many burdens you carry. And the story will get out, even without cameras and money. The angel has promised this. And you and everyone else will be amazed and more.

Manager: Hmm—amazed? A lot of things promise you the thrill of amazement, but...all right. You can come in. I still need to cash out, but I guess I'll trust you with the place, Joseph and Mary. Who could believe it? But still...on this night of all nights, I suppose anything is possible.

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