



## LAS POSADAS

Las Posadas, (Spanish: “The Inns”) is celebrated in Mexico and some parts of the United States between December 16 and 24 (nine days representing nine months of Mary’s pregnancy). Las Posadas commemorates the journey that Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of a safe refuge where Mary could give birth to the baby Jesus. When they were unable to find lodging in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary were forced to seek shelter in a stable, where the Christ Child was born.

Las Posadas is celebrated in cities and towns across Mexico. Each evening during the festival, a small child dressed as an angel leads a procession through the streets of the town. The procession is primarily made up of children dressed in nativity character and carrying lit candles in lanterns. Adults, including musicians, follow the procession, which visits selected homes and asks for lodging for Joseph and Mary. Traditionally, the procession is always refused lodging, though the hosts often provide refreshments. At each stop, passages of scripture are read and Christmas carols are sung.

Whilst it may not be possible to embark upon those same processions through the streets of your parish as in parts of the world, there may be a way of marking that final week of Advent in pockets of our parish communities. The figures of Mary and Joseph (maybe from the parish crib set) could be used as a focus for prayer in the homes of parishioners who would invite members of their own parish community to come and be part of this ‘journey’ around the parish. These figures can be part of the pilgrimage and ‘entrusted’ to families within the parish for these nine days of prayer; the final host family being responsible for bringing the Holy Family into Mass on Christmas Eve.

The prayer doesn’t need to be complicated and the evening doesn’t have to be elaborate. The focus is centred upon the home, the welcome, the advent carols, the prayer, and the refreshments. There is something so beautiful about entrusting these figures to one family and then passing them onto another family until they become the focus and centre of our nativity scene in Church.

You can find a great resource here:

[http://www.tens.org/download\\_file/view/221/](http://www.tens.org/download_file/view/221/)