

Dear Padre,

I recently moved to a parish that includes a large Mexican community that's known for their annual *posadas* event. What is that?

Las *posadas*, a nine-day novena preparation for the celebration of Christmas, begins December 16 and ends Christmas Eve.

Posada is Spanish for "inn." The ceremony remembers Mary and Joseph's trip to Bethlehem and their difficulty finding a place to stay. *Posadas* are celebrated in many ways, but the traditional celebration involves a group of people, the "pilgrims," going to several houses, knocking on the door, and asking for *posada*. The pilgrims sing the part of Joseph as he explains their situation and asks for a place to stay. The people inside sing back that they have no room and that the pilgrims should just move on.

On the last night, the people in the last house recognize that Mary is the Queen of Heaven and that the child she carries is the Savior of the World. They invite the pilgrims inside and hold a prayer service that may include a Scripture reading or the rosary. The celebration ends with food and singing.

This tradition is more than a folksy reenactment of Joseph and Mary's search for lodging—it's a solemn dramatization by women and men who believe God

searches with them, a touching ceremony that can help Christians today see the real needs of those who live without the security of a home, health insurance, or a steady job.

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Do you have a question for the Padre?

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A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

Many Christians have that face...from a funeral wake, a face of sadness. But Christ is risen! Christ loves you! And you have no joy? Let us think a bit about this and let us ask: "Do I have joy because the Lord is close to me, because the Lord loves me, because the Lord has redeemed me?"

GAUDETE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020



Our Parish Community

December 12, 2021

Third Sunday of Advent (C)

Zep 3:14–18a

Phil 4:4–7

Lk 3:10–18

Joy to the World!

This is the Sunday of joy, *Gaudete Sunday*. In the first reading, the people are told to "Shout for joy" because "the LORD is in your midst" (Zephaniah 3:14–15). The psalm response tells us to "cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and holy one of Israel" (see Isaiah 12). The second reading directs us to "rejoice in the Lord always" because "the Lord is near" (Philippians 4:4–5). In the Gospel, we see that "the people were filled with [messianic] expectation," even wondering "whether John might be the Messiah" (Luke 3:15). All John could say was that "one mightier than I is coming" (3:16).

So today, what are we waiting for this Sunday and how is God present? We know that God is already present with us in many ways: in the Church and sacraments; in the lives of good people we know; in

the depths of our hearts. And so, we rejoice. We also know that the story of salvation is unfinished. There are still so many evils from which we must be saved. When you think of them, what's at the top of your list?

We are eager for God to come into our lives anew to comfort us and strengthen us. We know we cannot do it alone. Even as we wait for the day of salvation to dawn, we rejoice for we know that it came before and will come again. That's why we sing "Joy to the World."

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- ★ Think of a few ways you have experienced God's goodness in your life. Rejoice and give thanks for these blessings.
- ★ What are your hopes for the day of salvation?

The LORD, your God, is in your midst...Who will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love.
ZEPHANIAH 3:17



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