

At Home Prayers for our Diocesan Posada Novena

We pray this Novena (on the days we cannot physically attend the Diocesan Posada) as we prepare for the coming of our Lord, Jesus, on Christmas. We reflect upon his birth while praying the Joyful Mystery of the Rosary, as we also pray for solidarity with our brothers and sisters whom have been marginalized, our families who have been separated and to uphold the dignity of all human life.

“Catholic Social Teaching tells us that to live in solidarity is to believe and live in the world as members of one human family - a family in which we must all take care of one another and recognize the worth, rights and responsibilities of ourselves and others.”

– USCCB

OPENING PRAYER FOR EACH DAY:

Sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Day 1

“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” - Leviticus 19: 33-34

When Mary was nine months pregnant, traveling to Bethlehem was not the ideal way to prepare for the birth of a baby. Joseph and Mary recognized the will of God for them and the situations that daily life presented, that they said yes to God. We are all foreigners on a Journey and the circumstances that we are placed in, may be difficult and challenging.

Day 2

“The new evangelization calls for followers of Christ who are unconditionally pro-life: who will proclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of life in every situation.” – St Pope John Paul II, 1999

We can imagine the invitation Mary received from God to be the mother of our Savior. “Do not be afraid, Mary...you will conceive in your womb and bare a son and you shall name him Jesus.” Sometimes God asks us to say yes, even when we do not understand exactly what He is doing. We may feel fear or doubt. His asking always rises out of love, the love through the birth of Jesus.

Day 3

“Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat.” – St Teresa of Calcutta

As we travel with Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, we are reminded what follows is not always easy, but that He will be with us. As Mary and Joseph travel through the countryside with the discomfort in weather, sleeping and cooking wherever they happened to stop. They trusted in God to care for them even in these circumstances. What discomforts are you encountering on your journey and where do you see God's hand reaching out to help you? Just as Mary and Joseph traveled many of our brothers and sisters today travel across borders for a better tomorrow.

Day 4

“If there is among you a poor person, one of your community...you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother and/or sister, but you shall open your hand to them, and lend them sufficient for their need.” - Deuteronomy 15:7-8

Joseph & Mary encountered many travelers as they journeyed to Bethlehem. Do we realize the opportunity to share God's love in our lives? We too encounter many people within our personal journey. Do we allow God's glory to shine in our hearts through the compassion and love for one another, especially those in need?

Day 5

"A society lacks solid foundations when ... if it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, then, and on the other hand, radically act to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized." (#15) Caritas in Veritate, Pope Benedict XVI, 2009

The journey was approximately eighty miles and might have seemed endless. Following God as Joseph & Mary did means moving forward; stepping out in faith and trusting every day, even when we do not know what will happen next. Sometimes it takes a long time to see the fruits of our efforts.

Day 6

"Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities but transforming them..." – US Bishops, Everyday Christianity

Think of Mary riding a donkey, but remember this is our Lady, Queen of Heaven. Mary, is seated on a donkey; Joseph, walking on the dusty trail; Jesus, the unborn baby in the womb; they teach us the way of humility. Look at your current position and contribution to society that may have been overlooked or when you have been unappreciated and passed over. Look at your lives as riding a donkey on a dirt path and your footsteps walking through the wilderness with no comfortable bed to rest. We must embrace these opportunities to walk with Mary in this journey and transform our world.

Day 7

"Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you." - Ephesians 4:31-32

As the evening approached and Mary and Joseph approached Bethlehem looking for shelter, imagine the anxiety of Joseph as they were being rejected door after door, "we have no room here" as Joseph looks back at Mary. "The world did not know him...His own people did not accept Him." (John 1) What can you and I do? We can make room for God in our hearts. Renew our love and accept God's love to dwell in our heart and with his grace offer the gift of forgiveness in our families and be an example of forgiveness in the world.

Day 8

"Being a believer means that one lives a certain way – walking with the Lord, doing justice, loving kindness, and living peaceably among all people. Christian discipleship means practicing what Jesus preached."– US Bishops, Everyday Christianity

Joseph and Mary stayed in the stable where animals lived -smelly and dark. Jesus' first crib was a feeding trough for animals. Bring any dark corner of your heart, of your life, to Jesus, to transform it into light. Reach out to others that feel separated from God, face difficult situations or dwell in darkness, show them the light through your love and assistance.

Day 9

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear” – 1 John 4:18

"And they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" (Mt 1:23) Join Joseph & Mary for a moment of silence to await the birth of Jesus. Rejoice that God is with us! It is the middle of the night and all the city is silent. We rejoice that truly God is with us and kneel for love of Him. Let us ask for the grace to change all that distracts us from building God's Kingdom and the courage to stand with our marginalized brothers and sisters. Let us courageously journey with Mary and Joseph at the close of this Advent season in hopeful longing for the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God in and through the person of Jesus.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR EACH DAY:

Pray One Decade of the Rosary: Joyful Mystery

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/rosaries/how-to-pray-the-rosary.cfm>

*Prayers adapted from <https://carmelitesistersocd.com/2014/las-posadas/> and Jesuits December reflections.