

Mission Office, Catholic Diocese of St. Cloud
11 South 8th Avenue, St. Cloud, MN 56301

(320) 251-1100

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www.stcdio.org/mission

Enter Holy Strangers

Las Posadas is a wonderful Mexican tradition that marks the Advent Novena of December 16-24th, in which communities play the part of Mary and Joseph, guided by an angel, as they walk from house to house asking for shelter. After being turned down a few times, one household finally welcomes them in, and the whole community celebrates together. This is repeated each night. What a wonderful way to mark Advent, and the waiting of the baby we now so warmly welcome, but who wasn't always so quickly invited in. This tradition, as do so many of the Advent season, reminds me of the work we have yet to do as church to truly welcome Christ, through welcoming others. I share with you the lyrics from a *Las Posadas* carol by Donna Peña that says it well:

En el nombre del cielo os pido posada pues no puede andar mi esposa amada. (In the name of Heaven I beg you for lodging, for my wife cannot walk)

Aquí no es mesón ,sigan adelante yo no debo abrir, no sea algún tunante. (This is not an inn, so keep going; I cannot open, you may be a rogue)

No seas inhumano, tenos caridad, que el Dios de los cielo te lo premiará. (Don't be in human, have mercy on us, that the GOD of heaven will reward you for it)

Mi nombre es José; Mi esposa es María y es Reina del cielo y

madre va a ser del Divino Verbo. (My name is Joseph; my wife is Mary and she is the queen of heaven and is going to be the mother of the Divine Word)

¿Eres tu José? ¿Tu esposa es María? Entren santos peregrinos, no los conocía. (Is that you Joseph? Your wife is Mary? Enter, holy strangers; I did not recognize you)

Entren santos peregrinos, reciban este rincón y aunque es pobre la morada, os la doy de corazón. Oh peregrina agraciada, yo te ofrezco el alma mía para que tengáis posada. (Enter, holy strangers, receive this corner, and though this dwelling is poor, I offer it with all my heart. Oh graced pilgrim, I offer you my soul so you may have lodging.)

As we embark on these last days of Advent, I invite you to reflect on these words. Who are the *holy strangers* in our midst? Do we recognize the presence of the Divine in them? Do we make room for others in our communities, and our hearts? What work do we still have to do to be a sheltering soul and Church? Consider adding this to your list of New Year's Resolutions!



Something to think about:

The greatest gift you will ever receive will never be found under a Christmas tree. It is far too valuable to be stored in any place but the depths of your heart.

Have a very merry Christmas, and a blessed New Year!!



Give it a Try!

From curriculum resources, to projects & activities, here are some ideas to think about using with your young people.



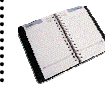
Mission Education Resources

The first week of January is an important one for us Catholics. Not only is it the Feast of the Epiphany, but in following the journey of the Magi and the Holy family, our Catholic Bishops have asked us to also celebrate our migrant brothers and sisters. The USCCB recognizes January 3-9th as *National Migration Week*, this year focusing especially on children, and our Minnesota Bishops have marked Sunday the 3rd as *Immigration Sunday*. Help your parish or school celebrate these days with resources from the Minnesota Catholic Conference. Visit: <http://mnccb.org/resources/immigration-Sunday> to find liturgy guides, bulletin announcements and

an activity guide with lessons and ideas for children, youth and adults. Or visit the *Justice for Immigrants MN* website at: www.jfimmn.org for more information about immigration in MN and our Catholic response. Help our church by educating and celebrating this January!

Service Ideas for January

Invite a speaker to talk about their experiences as an immigrant—perhaps a grandparent in your parish community, or a new generation immigrant family from the diocese. Then ask students to write letters or draw pictures for families immigrating to the area, or refugee families in need of a warm welcome. Consider doing a coat, hat, and mitten drive for those just arriving who are not



Don't Forget:

Be sure you know these upcoming mission dates and deadlines.

December 25th: Merry Christmas!!

December 24th—January 3rd: Mission Office closed for the holidays; we will re-open on Monday the 4th, 2010.

January 3rd: Immigration Sunday

January 3rd—9th: Migration Week



used to our Minnesota winters. Or ask students to come up with other creative ideas to help our brothers and sisters feel welcome and at peace. For more ideas or ways to offer help, contact Hands Across the World in St. Cloud: www.handsacrosstheworldmn.org