



MIGRANT  
POSADAS |  
ADVENT 2023



## Introduction

How the “mangers” or the “nativity scene” began, how they spread in the church is something that cannot be identified in detail. What remains in memory is that night in which Saint Francis of Assisi wanted to celebrate and dramatize Christmas, the event of God made human, made child: the Incarnation. The hagiographer and friar Thomas of Celano describes Francis' feelings like this: “I wish to celebrate the memory of the child who was born in Bethlehem and I want to contemplate in some way with my eyes what he suffered in his vulnerability as a child, how he was laid in the manger. and how he was placed on hay between the ox and the donkey.... There, simplicity is honored, poverty is exalted, humility is valued, and Greccio becomes a new Bethlehem. The night shines like the day, a pleasant night for men and animals. People arrive, and, faced with the new mystery, they taste new joys.” (1C 84-87)

The Capuchin researcher of Franciscanism, Br Leonhard Lehmann OFM Cap., tells us about the celebration that Saint Francis held on that Christmas in the town of Greccio in 1223, that, “both accounts (from Tomas de Celano and Saint Bonaventure) inform us about the famous Christmas celebration: the Poor Man wanted to reproduce, as faithfully as possible, a second Nativity scene, with the ox and the donkey, using a natural cleft in the rock as a cradle for the Baby Jesus, in the heart of nature and in the heart of the night. But he not only wanted to visibly reproduce the event of Bethlehem; “Francis also wanted the attendees to participate in what was celebrated there and for the celebration to drive them to a deeper faith and a more ardent devotion.”

These days, in many places and towns, we will meet to celebrate in a festive and theatrical way that search that Joseph and Mary had to carry out, to have a place where their son Jesus was born. These are the so-called “posadas.” The posadas are celebrations held by the people of God, with colors, songs, prayers, readings, dramatizations, and food. For Latin American people, these days are a great celebration, in reality as it should be, the celebration of the God who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to be a human being, son of Joseph and Mary, belonging to the Hebrew people and to a territory occupied by the Roman Empire: Palestine.



## *Introduction*

Saint Francis of Assisi had this great intuition to celebrate Christmas, to experience in the heart, with the senses and the lucid mind, the madness of love of God to become a human, to lower himself to the fragile human condition, even being free from sin, assumed the entire condition and historical structure of the time and culture of the Middle East. Francis of Assisi, and Clare, had hearts that vibrated with the mystery of God's love for humanity; their hearts were passionate that a God would love humanity so much, made in his image, that he would decide that his Son would assume the fate of the last ones, that “Kenosis,” that abasement of God, is what shook the feelings and thoughts of Francis and Clare.

These posadas join thousands of walkers, who are leaving their marks as migrants--men, women, elderly, young people, boys and girls, who are leaving with each step, the home and the territories that watched them flee, as well as Joseph and Mary did, to care for and protect little Jesus. With the posadas, we pray for each migrant, and we commit ourselves as the people of God, to welcome, to give shelter to each migrant who passes through our lands. We cannot celebrate this Christmas without having welcomed and protected a migrant as a brother or sister: “You will look at the migrant who resides next to you as one of your people and you will love him as yourself” Lev. 19.34.

**René Arturo Flores, OFM**

# Origin of the inns

These festivities, which year after year are part of our Christmas celebration, have their origins in colonial times and were religious in nature according to a biblical passage.



These celebrations consisted of a mass and performances about Christmas and small gifts were given to the attendees, which known as "aguinaldos." Today these generally consist of food, sweets, or candy, depending on the place and culture.



The piñatas are one of the most significant elements in the posadas and represent the triumph of faith over sin, the original piñatas have 7 peaks that represent each of the sins.



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At that time they used to be called, "Misas de Aguinaldo" (masses with a special Christmas gift) and were held from December 16 to 24 in churches and convents.



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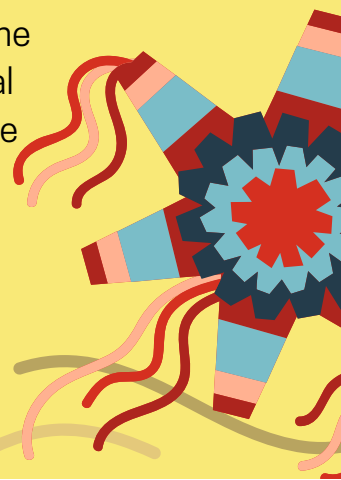
Over time these festivities changed, and the church allowed it to be more widespread and for more people to participate, and elements such as candles, piñatas, sparklers were added.



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Nowadays this celebration has been transformed in each region of Mexico and other Latin American countries, the posada consists of a biblical representation and once the pilgrim song ends, all the participants are part of a great party.





# FIRST DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

*we begin*

## BLESSING

*In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

*“Swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. People will not raise the sword against other people, they will not train for war.” Is 2,1*

## SONG:

1. Villancico panameño:



*to pray*

## CORNER:

We contemplate some symbolic images of the war conflict in Gaza and Israel.

## PRAYING WITH BIBLICAL PSALM 121:

“We wish peace to Jerusalem:  
«Let those who love you live safely,  
there is peace within your walls,  
security in your palaces.  
For my brothers and companions,  
I'm going to say: "Peace be with you."  
For the house of the Lord our God,  
I wish you everything well.”

## GOSPEL READING: LUKE 1,18-25

### *Reflection:*

Pope Francis, VII WORLD DAY OF THE POOR 2023.

*“Unfortunately, we must once again see new forms of poverty that are added to those described above. I think in a particular way of the populations living in war zones, especially of the children deprived of a serene present and a dignified future. No one will ever be able to get used to this situation; Let us keep alive every attempt so that peace is affirmed as a gift from the Risen Lord and the fruit of the commitment to justice and dialogue.”*

FIRST DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

*Prayer:*

“Happy are those who light a candle in Advent, and trust;  
Happy are those who renew hope in times of pandemic;  
Happy are those who experience the gratitude of living, in times of pain and death;  
Happy are those who fight to establish justice and equity, in the face of militaristic governments;”

**BLESSING:**

*“The Lord, bless us and keep us; Show us your face and have mercy, look at us with love and grant us your peace.” Saint Francis of Assisi.*



# HISTORY OF THE MANGER

Do you know who invented the manger?

The manger was invented by Saint Francis of Assisi, the saint of humility and poverty, on Christmas 1223, (800 years ago) many years ago, in the little town of Greccio, in Italy.

Francis was weak and sick, and thinking that perhaps this would be his last Christmas on earth, he wanted to celebrate it in a different and very special way.

A friend of Francis, Mr. Juan Velita, owned a small forest in the mountains of Greccio, and in the forest there was a grotto that to Francis looked similar to the little cave where Jesus was born, in the fields of Bethlehem, a site he had recently visited on his trip to the Holy Land.

Francis spoke with his friend, told him his idea of making a "living manger" there, and together they prepared everything, in secret, so that it would be a surprise for the inhabitants of the town, children and adults.

Among the townspeople, Francis and Juan chose some people to represent Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds; They made them promise not to say anything to anyone before Christmas and, following the story of the Gospel of Saint Luke, they prepared the scene of the nativity. They even got a beautiful baby to represent Jesus!

On Christmas night, when all the families were gathered in their homes, the church bells began to ring by themselves. They rang and rang as if there was a special celebration!. But no one knew what was happening. The village priest was not there, and he had not mentioned that there would be a Midnight Mass.

Surprised and scared at the same time, all the inhabitants of Greccio came out of their houses to see what was happening. Then they saw Francis calling them from the mountain, and telling them to go up to where he was.

Illuminating the way with torches, because the night was very dark and very cold, everyone headed to the indicated place. When they arrived they were so amazed that they fell to their knees, because they were seeing something they had never thought they would be able to see. It was as if they had gone back many, many years in time, and they were in Bethlehem, celebrating the first Christmas in history. Mary had Jesus in her arms, and Joseph, very excited, was talking with a group of shepherds and shepherds. They never tired of admiring the child who had just been born.

Later, when everyone calmed down, the priest, who had been an accomplice of Francis and Juan Velita in that secret, celebrated the Holy Mass, and Jesus was present in the consecrated Bread and Wine, as always happens when a Mass is celebrated, anywhere in the world.

After the Eucharist, Francis, full of love and joy, told everyone present, in great detail, the beautiful story of Christmas, and Jesus, "the light of the world," filled their hearts with peace and love.

Three years later, Francis of Assisi died, leaving us with this beautiful custom of making the manger every year.

# SECOND DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

we begin

## BLESSING

*In the name of the Father...*

*“Remember the Lord all the days of your life, my son, and do not deliberately sin or break his commandments. Do works of justice every day of your life and do not follow the paths of injustice» Tb 4,5.*

## SONG:

Villancico: [Here](#)



to pray

## CORNER:

Prayer gesture: We light a candle, we contemplate hope from that small light that the lit candle gives.

## PRAYING WITH PSALM 71:

*“In his days may justice flourish and peace until the moon disappears; dominate from sea to sea, from the Great River to the ends of the earth.*

*He will deliver the poor man who cried, to the afflicted who had no protector; He will take pity on the poor and the needy, and will save the lives of the poor.”*

## GOSPEL READING: LUKE 1,26-38.

Reflection:

Pope Francis, VII WORLD DAY OF THE POOR 2023.

*“It is easy, when talking about the poor, to fall into rhetoric. It is also an insidious temptation to stay focused on statistics and numbers. The poor are people, they have faces, stories, hearts and souls. They are brothers and sisters with their qualities and defects, like everyone, and it is important to enter into a personal relationship with each of them.”*



SEGUNDO DIA

DECEMBER | 2023

Prayer:

“Happy are those who are honest with themselves, those who are sensitive to reality;

Happy are those who accept their humble truth, their creaturely fragility;

Happy are those who are always learners, those who have an open mind;

Happy are those who treat others as they want to be treated;”

**BLESSING:**

*“The Lord, bless us and keep us; Show us your face and have mercy, look at us with love and grant us your peace.” Saint Francis of Assisi.*



# Bring your cup or mug

Every year during the posadas, around 100 Styrofoam cups are thrown away during each celebration.

Styrofoam takes 1000 years to degrade.

Biodegradables are also trash, but they reduce the use of disposables.





## THIRD DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

we begin

**BLESSING***In the name of the Father...**"The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion will graze together: a boy will be its shepherd. The cow will graze with the bear, her cubs will lie down together; The lion, like the ox, will eat straw. The nursing child will frolic near the serpent's hiding place" Is 11,1-10***SONG:**El niño del tambor: [Here](#)

to pray

**CORNER:***Gesture of prayer: we contemplate the faces of migrants crossing the Darien.***PRAYER WITH PSALM 22:***"The Lord, guide me along the right path, for the honor of his name.**Even though I walk through dark glens, I fear nothing, because you go with me:**Your rod and your staff calm me.**You prepare a table before me, in front of my enemies;**you anoint my head with perfume, and my cup overflows.**Your goodness and your mercy accompany me every day of my life,"***GOSPEL READING: LK 1,39-45**

Reflection:

*Pope Francis, VII WORLD DAY OF THE POOR 2023.**"interest in the poor is not exhausted by hasty alms; It requires reestablishing fair interpersonal relationships that have been affected by poverty. In this way, "not turning your face away from the poor" leads to obtaining the benefits of mercy, of charity that gives meaning and value to the entire Christian life... Faith teaches us that each poor person is a child of God and that Christ is present in him or her: "As they did it to the least of my brothers, they did it to me" (Mt 25:40)."*

TERCER DÍA

DECEMBER | 2023

*Prayer:*

Happy are those who celebrate Advent in the temple of creation;  
Happy are those who celebrate Advent in the liturgy of life;  
Happy are those who wait for Christmas with lights, music and tamales;  
Happy are those who celebrate this Advent, with the great offering of their lives.

**BLESSING:**

*“The Lord, bless us and keep us; Show us your face and have mercy, look at us with love and grant us your peace.” Saint Francis of Assisi.*











# Why the importance of Christmas Carols?

Singing Christmas carols is a way of showing our joy and gratitude to Jesus. Within Christmas traditions and customs, Christmas carols play an important role, but what is their true meaning?



The meaning of Christmas carols is to raise the spirit of Christmas and talk about the birth of Jesus. True Christmas music brings us closer to God and makes us have a higher heart. Christmas carols encourage participation in the Advent and Christmas liturgy in the sense that they prepare an atmosphere. These songs refer to the time we live to prepare our hearts and thus participate in liturgical celebrations with greater devotion. Singing Christmas carols is a way of showing our joy and gratitude to Jesus.



Join and Sing with Us



## FOURTH DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

we begin

**BLESSING***In the name of the Father...**“Always trust in the Lord, because the Lord is the perpetual Rock. He subdued the inhabitants of the height, the high city; It will bring it down, it will bring it down to the ground, until it touches the dust. The feet will tread on it, the feet of the oppressed, the steps of the poor” Is 26.1***SONG:**La manzanilla del Rosario: [here](#)

to pray

**PRAYER GESTURE:**

Breathe deeply, in silence, and go down to the center of your heart, and visualize what is now in it. Look how there are things that are not worth the space they occupy. Realize that without knowing how, it has been filling you, it has been overflowing. Perceive the inner need to open spaces, oxygenate your heart, your mind and thus enable the Spirit to constitute your human capacity to "connect" with God.

**WE PRAY WITH PSALM 97**

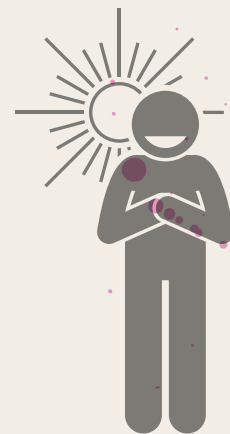
*Sing to the Lord a new song,  
because it has done wonders:  
His right hand has given him victory,  
his holy arm.  
The Lord makes his victory known,  
Reveals his justice to the nations:  
He remembered his mercy and his  
faithfulness  
in favor of the house of Israel.*

**GOSPEL READING. LK 1,45-55.**

Reflection:

Pope Francis, WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2023

“The flight of the Holy Family to Egypt was not the result of a free decision, nor were many of the migrations that marked the history of the people of Israel. Migrating should always be a free decision; but, in fact, in many cases, it is not today either. Conflicts, natural disasters, or more simply the impossibility of living a dignified and prosperous life in one's own land of origin force millions of people to leave.”



FOURTH DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

*Prayer:*

Happy are the communities that live Advent, united in diversity;  
Happy are those who are merciful, and do not allow themselves to be carried away by indifference;  
Happy are those who are supportive, share and distribute with kindness;  
Happy are those who dialogue, without resorting to the manipulation of obedience;  
Happy are those who take care of themselves, others and all creation.

**BLESSING:**

*“The Lord, bless us and keep us; Show us your face and have mercy, look at us with love and grant us your peace.” Saint Francis of Assisi.*





## This touching animated short reminds us that no grandparent should spend this Christmas alone

Spending Christmas alone is probably not in anyone's plans. But what happens if there is no other option?

What happens when perhaps we are older and the rest of the family cannot come to visit us or we simply no longer have family? What if we have been left alone because our actions have distanced us from everyone? What if the truth is that no one is excited about the idea of spending these holidays with us?

We share this animated short, entitled «Stella», It was made by Re-engage as a campaign to raise awareness about loneliness among older people at Christmas. It's moving, and I think quite necessary. Many grandparents are simply forgotten, discarded by their families as if they were an object.

And although it is difficult to believe it or perhaps we do not even contemplate the idea, the truth is that there are millions of people who not only spend Christmas alone, but most of the time.

It's a loneliness that hurts

Knowing that we were once young, took risks, were independent and adventurous, and that now we cannot take care of ourselves or even dress ourselves, is hard, very hard.

We forget that we are all going in that direction, on the way to old age. Have we ever stopped to think about how we would like to live it?

When our parents or grandparents seem to overwhelm us, do we think that we too will be older one day?

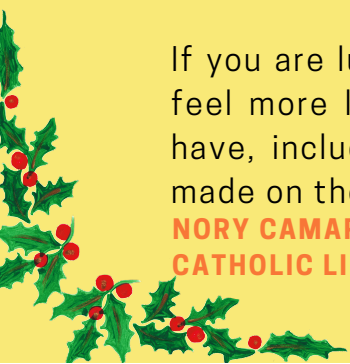
What treatment would we like to receive? What are we doing now to reap good results? What are we doing now to make sure that we are treated well, that our loved ones miss us, and are patient with us; that they comfort us, encourage us and love us just as we are.

How easy it is to ignore the idea of growing old and how easy it is to think that it won't happen to us, that "loneliness won't knock on our door."

Let us love and accompany our parents and grandparents

If you are lucky enough to have your parents or grandparents alive, make them feel more loved this Christmas than ever. Regardless of the limitations they have, include them in your activities, help them participate in the decisions made on these dates.

**NORY CAMARGO**  
**CATHOLIC LINK**



FIFTH DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

we begin

**BENDICIÓN**

In the name of the Father...  
“This is what the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: “People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will not have to cry... It will give you rain for the seed you sow in the field, and the grain harvested in the field will be abundant and succulent. On every high mountain, on every high hill there will be canals and channels of water.”  
Is 30,19

**SONG:**

Los pastores: Here



to pray

**GESTURE:**

We light a candle, we contemplate hope from that small light that the lit candle gives, each one mentions the most significant gift they received this year.

**WE PRAY WITH PSALM 146:**

“Praise the Lord, the music is good;  
Our God deserves harmonious praise.  
The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem,  
reunites deportees from Israel.  
He heals broken hearts,  
bind his wounds. The Lord sustains the  
humble,  
humiliates the wicked to the dust.”

**GOSPEL READING: LUKE 2,1-6**

Reflection:

Pope Francis, WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2023  
“To eliminate these causes and finally put an end to forced migrations, the common work of everyone is necessary, each one according to their own responsibilities. It is an effort that begins by asking ourselves what we can do, but also what we should stop doing. We must strive to stop the arms race, economic colonialism, the usurpation of other people's resources, the devastation of our common home.”

QUINTO DIA

DECEMBER | 2023

Prayer:

Happy are those who receive Christmas dancing and singing, those who smile these days;

Happy are those who have a morsel for another, those who share their table;

Happy are those who praise the God present in their life, and in this story;

Happy are those who hug with love, those who are in solidarity with migrants.

**BLESSING:**

*“The Lord, bless us and keep us; Show us your face and have mercy, look at us with love and grant us your peace.” Saint Francis of Assisi.*







# Games to enjoy

When the posadas arrive and it seems appropriate that, in addition to prayer, we accompany this meeting with some games. Therefore, we suggest that you organize some fun Christmas games to play with family and friends, ideas that guarantee laughter at the typical gatherings of these dates.

## **Marshmallow Eating Contest**

Marshmallows are sweets that cannot be forgotten during the Christmas season. Better to take advantage of them and have a marshmallow eating contest! You may have heard this game on television, but, in case you don't know it, it consists of seeing who can put the most marshmallows in their mouth and keep them there. The person who wins they receive a special gift.

## **Christmas version “Simon Says”**

We all know the game “Simon Says” but if you don't remember it, let us explain. To play it, there must be a person who directs or orders. This person tells what others should do, whether they jump or touch a part of the body. The trick is to play with the coordination and speed of the players.

## **Candy Cane Search**

This game consists of hiding objects in the house or the place where the posada is happening, and whoever collects the most candy or is the first to find all of the candies wins. To adapt it to the holiday, you can hide candy canes, Christmas hats or something alluding to the celebration. Then allot a certain amount of time for everyone to go search the house and, when the time is up, see who gathered the most of the items. Whoever wins will receive a special gift.

## **Unwrap the gift**

To play this game you need a gift, like a coupon or a gift card or something small that you can wrap in ribbon or some plastic, but it should be wrapped very well. Afterwards, each person will have 20 seconds to try to remove the wrapper; To add more excitement, you'll have to do it with some oven mitts. Participants can repeat it as many times as necessary, it is about someone winning the gift.



# SIXTH DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

we begin

## BLESSING

In the name of the Father...  
“How beautiful it is through the mountains, the roads that bring good news, that announce peace, that bring happiness, that announce salvation, and that say to Zion: «Now your God reigns!»» Isa 52,7

## SONG:

Blanca Navidad. Here



to pray

## GESTURE:

Take a piece of paper and write what was achieved and closed during this year, as well as what has not yet been completed, and place it in front of the group so that all can pray for our activities, goals, and deep dreams.

## WE PRAY WITH PSALM 24:

“Lord, teach me your ways,  
Instruct me on your paths:  
make him walk faithfully;  
teach me, because you are my God and Savior.  
Remember, Lord, that your tenderness and loyalty are eternal.  
The Lord is good and upright,  
and teach the way to sinners;  
makes the humble walk in righteousness,  
teach his way to the humble.”

## GOSPEL READING: LUKE 2,11.16

Reflection:

Pope Francis, WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2023

“A joint effort by each of the countries and the international community is necessary to ensure that everyone has the right to not have to emigrate, that is, the possibility of living in peace and with dignity in their own land. It is a right not yet codified, but of fundamental importance, whose guarantee is understood as co-responsibility of all states with respect to a common good that goes beyond national borders.”

SEXTO DÍA

DECEMBER | 2023

*Prayer:*

Advent, you turn our gaze to creation, where everything originated, to the first Word of God, to the place of encounter with the love of God that is in each creature. Advent, you turn our gaze to the other, to the different, to the diverse. This is time to recreate our gaze, to contemplate from the heart.

**BLESSING**

*“The Lord, bless us and keep us; Show us your face and have mercy, look at us with love and grant us your peace.” Saint Francis of Assisi.*



# THE CHRISTMAS OF GRECCIO CELEBRATED BY SAINT Francis (1223)

## Story by Thomas of Celano (1 Cel 84-87)

Worthy of remembering and celebrating with pious memory is what Francis did three years before his glorious death, near Greccio, on the day of the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. There lived in that region a man named Juan, with a good reputation and a better tenor of life. Francis loved him with singular love, because although he was from noble family and honorable, he despised the nobility of blood and aspired to the nobility of the spirit. About fifteen days before the Lord's Christmas, the blessed Francis called him, as he often did, and said to him: "If you want us to celebrate this feast of the Lord in Greccio, hurry up to go there and quickly prepare what I am going to tell you. I wish to celebrate the memory of the child who was born in Bethlehem and I want to contemplate in some way with my eyes what he suffered in his vulnerability as a child, how he was reclined in the manger and how he was placed on hay between the ox and the donkey." When the good and faithful man heard this, he ran quickly and prepared in the appointed place what the Saint had indicated to him.

The day arrived, a day of joy, of exultation. Brothers from many places were summoned; men and women of the region, overflowing with joy, prepared, according to their possibilities, candles and torches to illuminate that night that, with its twinkling star, illuminated all the days and years. Finally, the saint of God arrived and, seeing that all things were ready, he contemplated them and was glad. The manger is prepared, the hay is brought and the ox and donkey are placed. There simplicity is honored, poverty is exalted, humility is valued, and Greccio becomes a new Bethlehem. The night shines like the day, a pleasant night for the people and the animals. People arrive, and, faced with the new mystery, they taste new joys. The forest resounds with voices and the rocks respond to hymns of joy. The brothers sing the praises of the Lord and the entire night passes between songs of joy. The saint of God stands before the manger, overflowing with sighs, transfixed with pity, melted with ineffable joy. The solemn rite of the mass over the manger is celebrated and the priest enjoyed singular consolation.

The saint of God wears the vestments of a deacon, for he was one, and with a sonorous voice he sings the holy gospel. His powerful and sweet voice, his clear and well-pitched voice, invites everyone to the supreme awards. Then he preaches to the people who attend, and both when speaking of the birth of the poor King and of the small city of Bethlehem he says words that pour honey. Many times, when he wants to mention Christ Jesus, burning with love, he calls him, "the Child of Bethleem," and, pronouncing "Bethleem" like a bleating sheep, his mouth fills with a voice; even more, of tender affection. When he called him "boy of Bethleem" or "Jesus," he passed his tongue over his lips as if he tasted and savored the sweetness of these words on his palate.



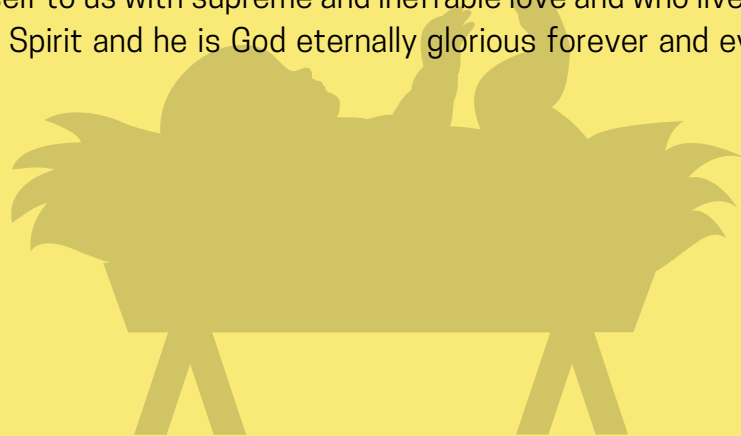
# THE CHRISTMAS OF GRECCIO CELEBRATED BY SAINT Francis (1223)

## Story by Thomas of Celano (1 Cel 84-87)

The gifts of the Almighty multiplied there; a virtuous man has admirable vision. There was a child who, lifeless, was lying in the manger. The saint of God approaches and awakens him as if from a stupor of sleep. This vision is not without meaning, since the child Jesus, buried in oblivion in many hearts, was resurrected by his grace, through his servant Francis, and his image remained engraved in loving hearts. Once the solemn vigil was over, everyone returned home filled with joy.

The hay placed on the manger is preserved, so that, as the Lord multiplied his holy mercy, donkeys and other animals may be cured through it. And so it actually happened: many animals in the surrounding region that suffered from various diseases, eating this hay, were cured of their ailments. Furthermore, women with long and painful labors, placing a little hay on top of them, give birth happily. And the same thing happens with many people: with such a means they obtain the cure of various illnesses.

The place of the manger was later consecrated in the temple of the Lord. In honor of the most blessed Father Francis, an altar was built over the manger and a church was dedicated, so that, where animals once grazed on straw feed, human beings could also eat there continually. For the health of soul and body, the flesh of the spotless and undefiled Lamb, Jesus Christ our Lord, who gave himself to us with supreme and ineffable love and who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit and he is God eternally glorious forever and ever. Amen. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.



# SEVENTH DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

*we begin*

## **BLESSING:**

*In the name of the Father...  
“A voice cries out: “Open the way for  
Yahweh in the desert; On the way we  
trace a path to God; that all the ravines  
be filled in and all the hills and hills be  
reduced; May the slopes flatten and the  
hills fall like a plain.»” Is 40*

## **SONG:**

Arre Borriquito: [Here](#)



*to pray*

## **GESTURE:**

Mention the skill or talent that you can use to help migrants. Show it, share it, and give thanks together because your hands, your mind, and your heart have been put into new bags that welcome the little ones in your own way.

## **WE PRAY WITH PSALM 26:**

*“The Lord is my light and my salvation,  
Who will I fear?  
The Lord is the defense of my life,  
who will make me tremble?  
I hope to enjoy the joy of the Lord  
in the country of life.  
Wait on the Lord, be brave,  
be encouraged, wait on the Lord.”*

## **GOSPEL READING: LUKE 2,36-39**

### *Reflection:*

Pope Francis, WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2023

*“While we work so that all migration can be the result of a free decision; we are called to have the maximum respect for the dignity of each migrant; and this means accompanying and governing the flows in the best possible way, building bridges and not walls, expanding the channels for safe and regular migration.”*



SEVENTH DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

*Prayer:*

Let hope come in our towns, so people are no longer forced to migrate. May the hope of living in justice, joy and peace come. May the violence exercised by organized crime and the police, and the machismo that murders come to an end. Hope comes, and thus, we can dance, sing and celebrate life as a free people.

**BLESSING:**

*“The Lord, bless us and keep us; Show us your face and have mercy, look at us with love and grant us your peace.” Saint Francis of Assisi.*

# What distance separates us?

## **Feeding Hope**

When I was little, when Christmas arrived, I was filled with great excitement knowing that on Christmas Eve the whole family would be together. And so it was. Over time, some members stopped going due to unresolved problems, some because they had died, and others due to adverse circumstances. The truth is that the memory of those Christmases with the whole family would be increasingly valuable.

Despite the lack of members and many kilometers of separation, the tradition continues and with it the hope of experiencing communion, love and affection as a family. Family is a reference and impulse, it is diversity where there are differences and confrontations.

That is why it is the perfect environment to practice charity, patience, tolerance and so many virtues. We also celebrate this: that there is family, that there is reunion, that we can enjoy the gift of sharing time with people we love so much. What better environment than a family one to celebrate the birth of Jesus?

## **Cultivate Closeness.**

Even if we are physically and emotionally distanced, it is always a good time to start cultivating closeness. With the hope that family gatherings give, I propose these four tips if you will be away from your family at Christmas.

**Call:** As simple as it may seem, a phone call or video call can make all the difference. It can be a bridge to hug and give affection to our loved ones.

## **Ambience**

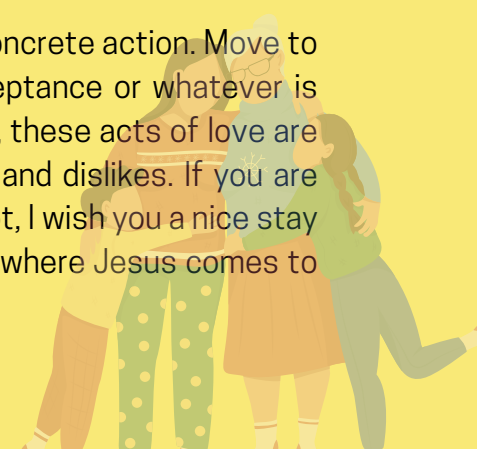
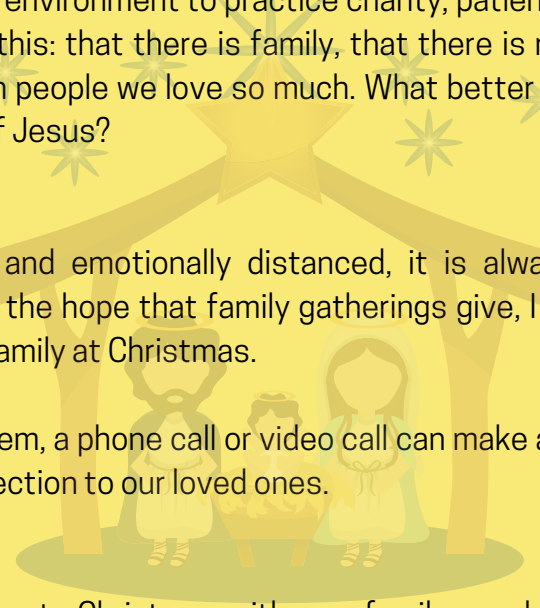
If you won't be able to celebrate Christmas with your family, surely wherever you are you will have significant people to share this date with. Promoting a Christmas Eve with a family atmosphere of affection, love, attention and charity is an excellent way to honor the family that is distant.

## **Time**

Prayer is important, the brick and gasoline of life. Pray for your family, for those who are far away physically and emotionally. This means directing your heart, and putting your grain of sand into action, towards a life where the family is united in virtue, where Jesus, who is love, reigns.

**Get Closer:** Especially with those who are emotionally distant, take concrete action. Move to sincere dialogue, listening and patience, forgiveness, affection, acceptance or whatever is necessary to be a little closer. Well, although the distancing is strong, these acts of love are stronger. Furthermore, life is too short to spend it on grudges, envy and dislikes. If you are going to travel to meet your family, I wish you a good journey. And, if not, I wish you a nice stay in your home. Whatever the case, I hope you have a family Christmas where Jesus comes to dinner.

**JOEL CALDERÓN**  
**CATHOLIC LINK**



# EIGHTH DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

*we begin*

## BENDICIÓN

*In the name of the Father...  
"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
although you are the least among all  
the people of Judah, you will hand  
me over to him who must govern  
Israel: his origin is lost in the past,  
in ancient times." Micah 5:1*

## SONG:

Ande, ande, ande La Marimorena:  
Here



*to pray*

## GESTURE:

Now each one is going to imagine, what it would be like to wake up a day without the weights or wounds that you carry with your story. Imagine that nothing weighs on you, nothing hurts, and there is no longer room in your backpack for any of these wounds. There may not be any wonderful closures, but releasing it gives relief from the fact that it's over! It is likely that it will not close as I would like, but with gratitude for what happened and what I experienced, with gratitude.

## WE PRAY WITH PSALM 125:

*"When the Lord changed the fortunes of Zion,  
we seemed to dream:  
our mouths were filled with laughter,  
the language of songs.  
May the Lord change our luck,  
like the torrents of the Negeb.  
Those who sowed with tears  
They harvest between songs."*

## GOSPEL READING: LK 2.39-41

### *Reflection:*

Pope Francis, WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2023

*"Wherever we decide to build our future, in the country where we were born or elsewhere, the important thing is that there is always a community willing to welcome, protect, promote and integrate everyone, without distinction and without leaving anyone out."*



E I G H T H D A Y

DECEMBER | 2023

Prayer:

Happy are the communities that live united in diversity and plurality;  
Happy are those who are merciful, who do not allow themselves to be carried away by indifference;  
Happy are those in solidarity, who share with the migrant who goes along the roads;  
Happy are those who forge their inner freedom, and make liberation possible;  
Happy and grateful are the hearts that continue to trust in the love of God;  
Happy are those who take care of themselves, others and all creation.

**BLESSING:**

*“The Lord, bless us and keep us; Show us your face and have mercy, look at us with love and grant us your peace.” Saint Francis of Assisi.*



# Bethlehem, the city where Jesus was born, will not celebrate Christmas. Here is the reason.

The municipality of Bethlehem, in Palestine, suspends Christmas celebrations and removes light decorations in the Nativity Square and other places in the city. The colorful lights are removed in front of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem due to the war. In a November 10th statement, the patriarchs of the Churches located in Jerusalem asked the faithful to pray and “to stand firm with those who face afflictions this year, renouncing any unnecessarily festive activities (...), focusing more on the spiritual meaning of Christmas, keeping in our thoughts our brothers and sisters affected by this war and its consequences, and with fervent prayers for a just and lasting peace for our beloved Holy Land.”

Hanna Hanania, outgoing mayor of Bethlehem, a town located in the Palestinian territory of the West Bank, told the English agency EWTN that, “Bethlehem, like any other Palestinian city, is in mourning and sadness.” “We cannot celebrate while we are in this situation,” referring to the war between Israel and Hamas.

Hanania joins the declaration of the Churches in the Holy Land, proposing that the festivities take on the aspect of prayer to God to “have peace in the land of peace.” The rules of the status quo existing since the time of the Ottoman Empire, which regulate access to sacred places, will be respected. Therefore, on the eve of Advent, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, will arrive on December 24, and Father Francesco Patton, Custos of the Holy Land, will make his solemn entry into Bethlehem on the day of the festival.

The procession along the Street of the Stars, which marks the journey of the Three Wise Men according to tradition, will be celebrated without music and with a reduced presence of people. Hanna Hanania commented: “We receive Christmas with sadness, pain and suffering. Parents are embarrassed to buy gifts for their children, when many families cannot meet their basic needs.”

The Basilica of the Nativity appears deserted. In the Nativity Grotto, pilgrims are rare. There are Palestinians trapped by the war in Bethlehem where they came to receive medical care or business matters. The conflict between Israel and Hamas hurts the lives of the citizens of both countries, demanding external moderation and a strong request for peace in their hearts.

**RAFAEL LLANES  
ZENIT**



NINTH DAY

DECEMBER | 2023

we begin

**BENDICIÓN**

*In the name of the Father...  
“Yahweh gives justice to the orphan  
and the widow, and loves the  
stranger by giving him food and  
clothing. Love therefore the  
stranger, for you yourself were a  
stranger in the land of Egypt.” Dt  
10,18*

**SONG:**

Villancico: [Here](#)



to pray

**CORNER**

We invite you to write your hymn of gratitude to honor life, what was, what could not be, what hurt and what you learned from it. and ask yourself: How do I want to honor life from now on?

**WE PRAY WITH PSALM 95:**

*“Let heaven rejoice, let the earth rejoice,  
resound the sea and all that fills it;  
cheer the fields and all that is in them,  
Hail the trees of the forest,  
before the Lord, who is already coming,  
now comes to rule the earth:  
will rule the world with justice  
and the people with fidelity.”*

**GOSPEL READING: MC 1,14-15**

*Reflection:*

Pope Francis, WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2023

*“The synodal path that, as a Church, we have undertaken, leads us to see the most vulnerable people – and among them many migrants and refugees – as special traveling companions, who we must love and care for as brothers and sisters. Only by walking together can we go far and reach the common goal of our journey.”*



N I N T H D A Y

DECEMBER | 2023

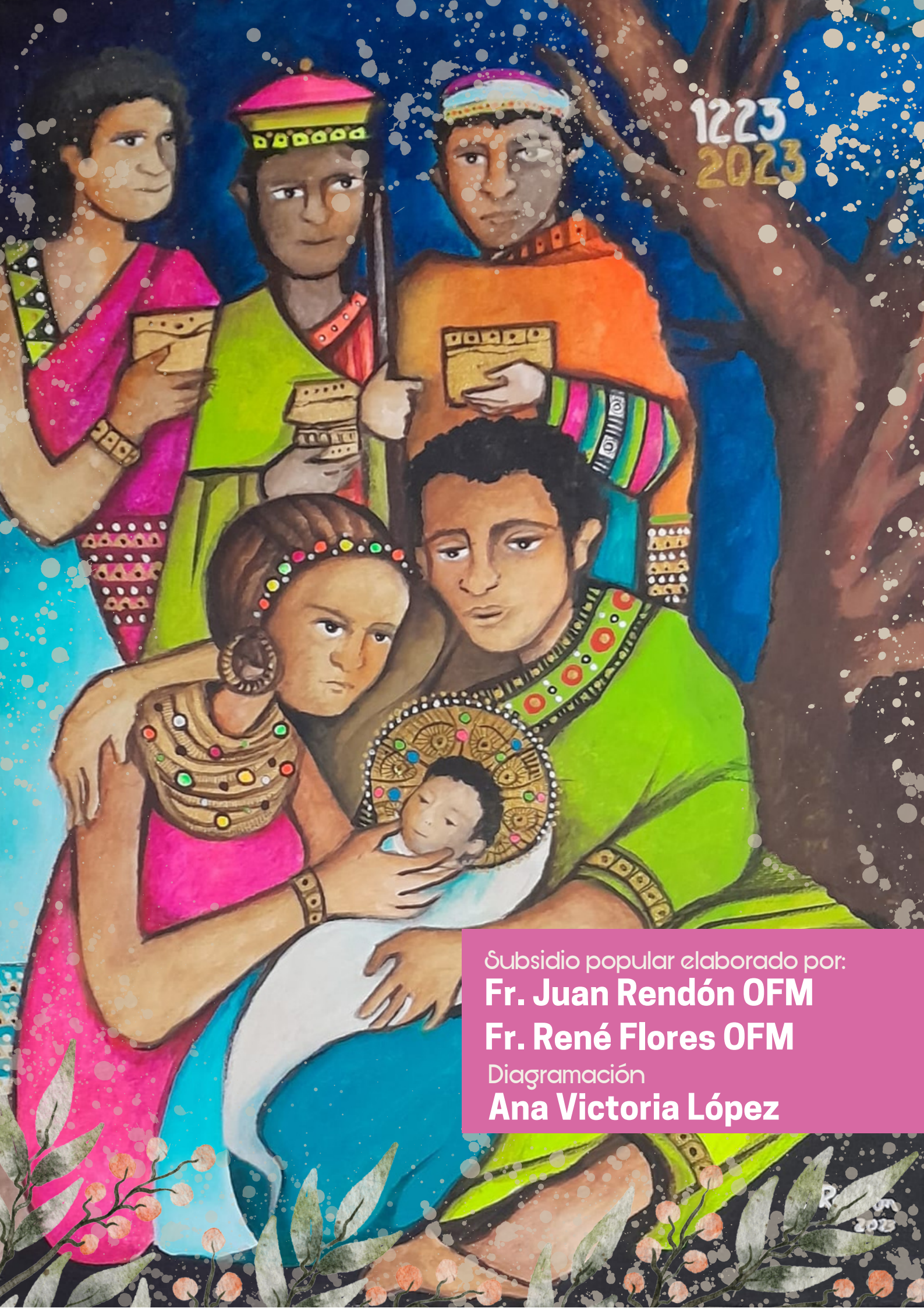
*Prayer::*

¡Blessed are you among women!  
Blessed Mary Mother, for being one of the poor of Yavhe;  
Blessed Mary, for being a simple and humble woman;  
Blessed Mary, for being a free and bold woman;  
Blessed Mary, for resisting bravely, at the foot of the cross;  
Blessed Mary, for being a woman who trusts and believes, who loves and fights.

**BLESSING:**

*“The Lord, bless us and keep us; Show us your face and have mercy, look at us with love and grant us your peace.” Saint Francis of Assisi.*



An illustration of a family in traditional attire. In the foreground, a woman in a pink dress and a man in a green tunic hold a baby wrapped in a white cloth. The baby is held in a decorative wooden cradleboard. Behind them stand three other people: a woman in a pink dress, a man in a green tunic, and a man in an orange tunic. They are all wearing traditional headbands and jewelry. The background is a dark blue night sky with white stars and a large tree on the right. The overall style is colorful and folk-art inspired.

1223  
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