

Posada Liturgy

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Everyone enters and is seated. Stage center is a door, the chancel/communion table is curtained off.

Katie and Fr. Robert dialogue

Prompt: *What is the Posada Pageant, and why have we chosen to present it differently?*

Narrator:

Like the great north star that guides us to Christ, every Christmas pageant has a grand, guiding arc. We come together to share the incredible Christmas story of the pristine woman draped in blue, faithfully attended by the humble man, and instructed by the wisdom of angels. These are the threads of our familiar yet miraculous narrative.

We set out to find a bright shining moment – to be with this celestial couple. But as we draw near, what we find are two strangers, displaced by their government, dirty with grief, begging for shelter, and birthing into hay.

Likewise, the wisest of men will follow the Great North Star - low, large, and fierce in the heavens. But the nearer they come to the star, the smaller and smaller it grows. Until eventually, they find it captured in the humble lantern, lighting the dim quarters of an exiled family, awaiting census.

The most devout among us are drawn to this star and this story because it is *extraordinary and grand*. But tempted by this grandeur, we do not follow the star until it becomes a lantern, or the couple until they become strangers. We risk missing heaven because it looks too much like earth. We refuse the gospel because it sounds too much like our own story.

Fr. Robert asks Katie:

What does it mean, to risk missing heaven and the gospel because it looks too much like earth and our own story?

While answering, Katie begins putting on a black hijab. Robert, a Kurta. Becoming a "Mary and Joseph"

Katie:

I think we miss heaven for earth in a lot of ways, all the time. We get so caught up, looking for the pristine and pregnant that we miss the desperate and child weary; I think we look so hard for this beautiful virgin, that we miss *an afraid, middle-eastern woman*

(hijab on, looks to crowd)

I am Mary. 14 years old, A political refugee, shameful to my family and my betrothed.

Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Caravaggio – they gave you someone to celebrate – white-faced and lovely. But that is not me. I am the one you despise. It is into an oppressed and terrified body

that the God became flesh. Logos into chaos. Filthy, the dust of war on my face, The savior in my belly.

I think we miss the gospel...because it looks too much like the cover of Newsweek, and not enough like the art in our museums.

ACT 1

***KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK**

[three loud knocks]

Door in center of of alter opens, Posada Icon sits on communion table

Narrator:

Matthew 1: 18-25

***KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK**

Mary and Joseph dialogue, in remembrance, Jesus's conversations about the stranger and doing unto the least. Ending with:

... But I think about that conversation every time this year... I remember that night he was born – wondering where and when and if we would ever be home. It makes sense to me that Jesus would talk about strangers in that way – that is how he came into this world. A stranger, born of a stranger.

***KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK**

Joseph:

[tells story from his perspective, including his experience of Herod, the census, the history of his people, and his political exile] Ending with:

...I remember the knocking. The embarrassment, the search for refuge

***KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK**

Mary:

It is hard to imagine anyone ever rejecting you. I know you as strong, humble, kind, and dedicated.

Joseph:

They know me as stranger, other, frightening

Narrator:

We invite you at this time to reflect aloud or silently your own fears and beliefs about the stranger at this time.

Fr. Robert and Katie remove costumes, lay them on communion table

***DOOR CLOSES**

Robert and Katie are seated, stools are removed, Prie-Dieu is put at altar facing door

Narrator:

“Woe to you shepherds...You eat the fat and clothe yourselves, you feast without even feeding the flock. You haven’t strengthened the sick, or healed the diseased. The broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. (Ez. 34:2-5)

ACT 2

***KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK**

[Celebrant kneels on prie-dieu placed in front of altar, and conducts liturgy facing door, kneeling]

Celebrant: Holy God, have mercy upon us

People Holy God, have mercy upon us

Celebrant Holy God, have mercy upon us

Congregation and Celebrant:

Most holy and merciful Father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word, and deed; By what we have done, and by what we have left undone. (BCP 267)

***DOOR OPENS**

[Posada icon is gone, Cross is in it’s place]

Celebrant:

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength, we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

People Have mercy on us, Lord

Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done; for the blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty

People Accept our repentance, Lord

For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,

People Accept our repentance, Lord

Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us

People Favorable hear us, for your mercy is great

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation

People That we may show forth your glory in the world

Celebrant offers comfort and absolution:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)

Celebrant	The Lord has put away your sins
<i>People</i>	<i>Thanks be to God</i>
Celebrant	Abide in Peace

ACT 3

Litany of Welcome

[the prompts are spoken by lay attendance, from audience, out loud. Whole congregation response in italics]

Dear Jesus, you came into this world as a migrant
We welcome you, Jesus

There was no room for your family at the inn
We welcome you, Jesus

Along with the angels in heaven
We welcome you, Jesus

Along with the shepherd who wandered the hills
We welcome you, Jesus

Along with the Magi who traveled from the East
We welcome you, Jesus

Your family became refugees fleeing from Herod
We welcome you, Jesus

In Egypt you were an alien
We welcome you, Jesus

In your public life you did not have a place to rest
We welcome you, Jesus

Dear Jesus we see you today
We welcome you, Jesus

In refugees fleeing war and violence
We welcome you, Jesus

In immigrant seeking a better life
We welcome you, Jesus

In migrant workers who enrich our land with their labor
We welcome you, Jesus

In seafarers and other people on the move
We welcome you, Jesus

Song: O Gracious Light

Celebrant
People

Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord
Thanks be to God