

## ***La Gran Posada***

*La Gran Posada* commemorates the journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem and their quest for shelter for the birth of Jesus. Those playing the roles of the parents seek lodging (Spanish, *posada*) while other participants act as those who might offer space. They form a procession, often with Mary on a donkey, and sing a dialogue of request and rejection until the innkeeper welcomes the pilgrims.

This extra-liturgical tradition has been practiced in Mexico and surrounding areas since the sixteenth century and has been adopted widely in recent years. While in some places it is a single event, in others it occurs on the nine evenings from December 16 through 24 recalling the months of Mary's pregnancy. The essential elements of the commemoration are often expanded to include additional singing, other music, games, and communal food and drink.