

WEEK FOUR:

Las Posadas and Our Call to Hospitality

We look at the Bible's commands to offer hospitality as we learn about traditional Latin American practices in the days leading up to Christmas. Margarita shares her work to secure justice for immigrants.

SCRIPTURE READING: GENESIS 18:1-5, 20-22 19:1-3

¹The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ²He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. ³He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said."

²⁰Then the Lord said, "How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! ²¹I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know." ²²So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Lord.

The two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and bowed down with his face to the ground. ²He said, "Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you can rise early and go on your way." They said, "No; we will spend the night in the square." ³But he urged them strongly; so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.



SCRIPTURE READING: LUKE 2:1-7



¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

SCRIPTURE READING: HEBREWS 12:28-13:3

²⁸Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; ²⁹for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

^{13:1}Let mutual love continue. ²Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. ³Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.



WEEK FOUR: REFLECTION

The “sin of Sodom” is no longer understood to have as much to do with human sexuality as with the biblical imperative to offer hospitality to strangers. The story of the city’s destruction begins with Abraham offering hospitality to God; his nephew Lot offers hospitality to the angels who have come to investigate the reported iniquity of the city.

Some scholars believe that Jesus’ command to “Love your neighbor as yourself” is based upon a commandment in the Old Testament book of Leviticus: “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt” (19:33-34a).

The Latin American celebration of Las Posadas is a commentary on Mary and Joseph’s need for hospitality when they traveled to Bethlehem; it has been a Mexican tradition for over 400 years. Las Posadas, which translates as “the inns,” takes place over nine evenings; some communities celebrate a particular virtue, such as humility or generosity, on each of the evenings. Two participants might be dressed as Mary and Joseph: sometimes Mary rides on a donkey. They are part of a procession of carolers going door to door. On each night of the celebration, a different home has been selected as the inn that will be welcoming; other homes tell the couple they must move on. Even at the designated “inn,” the objections of the innkeeper must be overcome with persistence. Each evening ends with the sharing of food and drink.

Many Christians believe that the Bible’s commandments to offer hospitality to strangers should impact the plight of refugees and asylum seekers. People come to this nation seeking a safe haven from the violence, poverty, corruption, and oppression of their home countries. They fear that there will be “no room at the inn.”



Recommended Hymns:

ELW 242: [Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn](#)

ELW 247: [Come Now, O Prince of Peace](#)

ELW 248: [People, Look East](#)

ELW 715: [Christ, Be Our Light](#)

ELW 723: [Canticle of the Turning](#)

ACS 908: [In a Far-Off Place, Jesus Comes](#)

ACS 1042: [May This Church Be Like a Tree](#)

ACS 1062: [Build a Longer Table](#)

Other Hymns and Songs:

[“¡Miren Cuántas Luces!”](#)

[La Canción Para Pedir Posada](#)

WEEK FOUR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why do so many people seek asylum in the United States?
- What is your reaction when the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is understood as a refusal to welcome strangers in need of shelter?
- How would you feel about welcoming a stranger into your home?

INTERVIEW WITH MARGARITA ROMO



Margarita Romo is an activist for immigrant farmworkers in Florida. She was inducted into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame in 2013. [Learn more here.](#)