News



A little girl dressed as an angel and perched on the shoulders of a grown-up participates in a traditional posada procession along the border wall in Nogales, Mexico, on Saturday, Dec. 20. (Anita Snow)



by Anita Snow

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Nogales, Mexico — December 24, 2025

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In the shadow of the U.S.-Mexico border wall, two teenagers dressed as Mary and Joseph led more than 200 people from both countries Saturday, Dec. 20, in a traditional yuletide procession reenacting the search for shelter where Jesus could be born.

"In the name of heaven. I beg you for lodging. For my beloved wife cannot walk," the participants sang in Spanish. "Don't be inhumane; have mercy on us. The God of the heavens will reward you for it."

The group was accompanied by musicians seated on a low-bed trailer pulled by a truck that passed auto repair shops, convenience stores and homes surrounded by black wrought iron fencing. A scattering of small children wearing white robes, wings and halos walked along the dusty route or were carried on the shoulders of grown-ups.



Teen girls in the foreground are dressed in costumes portraying Mary and an angel as they prepare Dec. 20 for a traditional yuletide procession known as a posada along the border wall in Nogales, Mexico. (Anita Snow)

The posada group included Bishop José Luis Cerra Luna of Nogales, Mexico, as well as retired Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, who is serving as apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Tucson prior to the Dec. 22 announcement that Fr. James Misko, vicar general and moderator of the curia for the Diocese of Austin, Texas, will be Tuscon's new bishop.

The bi-national posada, literally "inn" in Spanish, is organized annually by the Catholic-run Kino Border Initiative, a nonprofit charity that offers shelter, meals and other services to migrants. This year's event took its name, "Migrants: Pilgrims of Hope," from Pope Leo XIV's message this year about migrants and refugees.

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  People from Mexico and the United States participate in a traditional posada ("inn" in Spanish) procession along the border between the two countries, Dec.

20 in Nogales, Mexico. (Anita Snow)

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Retired Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas, left, apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Tucson, Arizona, and Bishop José Luis Cerra Luna, right, of Nogales, Mexico, are pictured as the posada along the U.S.-Mexico border wall got underway Dec. 20 in Nogales, Mexico. (Anita Snow)

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An adolescent boy portrays Joseph in a traditional posada procession in Nogales, Mexico, on Saturday, Dec. 20. (Anita Snow)

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A lowbed trailer carrying musicians is towed by a truck along the U.S.-Mexico border wall during a posada procession in Nogales, Mexico, on Saturday, Dec. 20. (Anita Snow)

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Nogales, Mexico, residents watch a procession of more than 200 people participating in a traditional posada in honor of migrants Dec. 20. (Anita Snow)

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Posada procession in Nogales, Mexico, on Saturday, Dec. 20 (Anita Snow)

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Children taking part in a traditional posada procession along the border wall in Nogales, Mexico, stop by a cross to dip their hands in paint and leave their handprints in a gesture honoring migrants on Dec. 20. (Anita Snow)

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Staff and volunteers of the nonprofit Kino Border Initiative in Nogales, Mexico, welcome participants in a traditional posada procession to a holiday celebration with food and mariachi music on Dec. 20. (Anita Snow)

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A migrant family enjoys a festive meal at the Kino Border Initiative headquarters in Nogales, Mexico, following a traditional posada procession along the border wall on Dec. 20. (Anita Snow)

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Migrants, staff, volunteers and friends enjoy a holiday meal at the Catholic-run migrant charity Kino Border Initiative headquarters following a traditional posada procession in Nogales, Mexico, on Dec. 20. (Anita Snow)

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Medical students from the University of Arizona in Tucson take part in a traditional Mexican holiday celebration at the Kino Border Initiative headquarters in Nogales, Mexico, on Dec. 20. From left: Jillian Max, Isabella Steidley, Jenna Glovsky and Victoria Rubio. (Anita Snow)



A mariachi band performs at a traditional Mexican posada celebration at the Kino Border Initiative headquarters in Nogales, Mexico, on Dec. 20. (Anita Snow)

"We want to express our regret that anyone should have to leave their home due to violence, persecution or poverty," Cerra told the crowd before they stepped off mid-morning for the 2-mile walk on a sunny winter day along the border wall of rusted steel bollards.



A Christmas tree and a Nativity scene awaiting the arrival of baby Jesus stands in a corner at the Catholic-run Kino Border Initiative headquarters, Dec. 20 in Nogales, Mexico. (Anita Snow)

He called the posada pilgrimage "a sign of our commitment to make visible and real the hope that dwells in the hearts of so many migrants who come to our community in Nogales."

The event came at the end of a year that has seen a dramatic crackdown on immigration by the administration of President Donald Trump, who made mass

deportation a key campaign theme.

Later, singing Spanish versions of Christmas carols such as "Silent Night," the group arrived at Kino's headquarters, where they were greeted with a large welcome sign, freshly made tacos and a mariachi band.

This year's posada participants included four medical students from the University of Arizona in Tucson who volunteer at the center's health clinic.

"It has been really important for us to come down here over the last year and experience this firsthand," said student Jenna Glovsky, who has volunteered once a month.

"It has really helped our medical Spanish," student Victoria Rubio added.

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