



In El Salvador, the Latin American countries, Spain and even in The Philippines, before Christmas we celebrate a novena of Visits to the houses in the village or area of the town with 'Mary and Joseph' asking for shelter on their way to Bethlehem. It is often acted out with the children dressed up and or processing with candles and the statues of Mary and Joseph.

On arrival at the house chosen for the visit a group assembles at the door and sings asking to be let in – another group inside the house refuses to open the door as they have closed up for the night. The verses go to-and-fro until the house owners realise that the 'Mother of God' is at the door and joyfully lets them in and welcomes them with even more singing.

Inside the house we all pray the Rosary with the litanies or a have a Celebration of the Word.

After the prayers the family of the house offers refreshments to all gathered (in most places that can be quite a lot of people when all the children gathered on the street are included and in fact the drunks or drug addicts – no one ever seems to be turned away).

Reflection

The Lord Jesus is the most marvellous gift of God.... His presence calls us to repentance and conversion, His beautiful face shines like the sun for those who hope in His new coming. Peace and Good Will to all those who hope in the Lord.

Prayer

Lord, listen to the prayer of your people, full of joy at the coming of Your Son in mortal flesh and when you come again in glory, at the end of time, may we rejoice when we hear from your lips the invitation to possess the Eternal Kingdom. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.