

Children's Moment

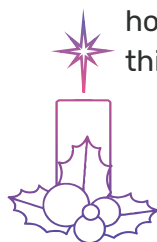


When we think of constellations, we often think about the shapes and stories from the connecting stars in the sky. But for the ancient Inca people, they saw constellations in the dark spaces in between the stars. Today, we call these "dark constellations," which can be found in the Milky Way, Galaxy.

One of the most important constellations for the Inca was Yacana, the life-giver and protector of all llamas on earth. Llamas gave the Inca food, helped carry things, and their wool was used for clothing and blankets. Even though most of Yacana is made of dark space, two bright stars act like the llama's eyes and are the first to appear in the sky in November. The dark constellation shows two different llamas—a mother and her baby. The Incas believed that at night, when no one was watching, the mother would go to the oceans and drink special waters: the water of sadness, the water of hunger and thirst, and the water of people's troubles. By doing this, she kept the seas from overflowing and flooding the earth, helping everyone stay safe.

In our Advent journey this week, we're invited to reflect on joy and the story of two very special mothers: Mary and Elizabeth. Upon greeting Elizabeth, Mary sings her song of the Good News and of God who feeds the hungry with good things, comes to help the children, and shows mercy—actions much like the mother llama Yacana.

What wisdom might these dark constellations have to teach us about joy, mothering, and community care? Maybe they show us how joy lives in the space in between, like the energy in relationships that you can't see but know when you feel it. Perhaps joy can be found in the dark as well as the light, when hope and love are there to surround you. How might you discover joy in unexpected spaces in your life this week?



*"...WHEN THEY SAW THE **STAR**, THEY WERE FILLED WITH **JOY**..."*

MATTHEW 2:10