



Of Seeds and Flowers



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IT'S A BOY! – MERRY CHRISTMAS, 2021.

“Each one of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus.”

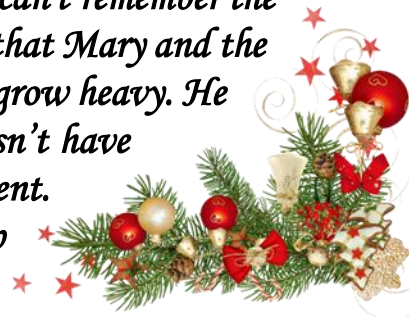
The owner of the inn had awakened earlier than most in the town. After all, the inn was full; all the beds taken. Every available mat or blanket had been put to use. -even the courtyard was full. Soon all the customers would be stirring and there would be a lot of work to do.

One's imagination is kindled thinking about the conversation of the innkeeper and his family at the breakfast table. Did anyone mention the arrival of the young couple the night before? Did anyone ask about their welfare? Did anyone comment on the pregnancy of the girl on the donkey? Perhaps. Perhaps someone raised the subject. But, at best, it was raised, not discussed. There was nothing that special about them. They were just one of the of the several families turned away that night. Besides, who had time to talk about them when there was so much excitement in the air? Augustus did the economy of Bethlehem a favor when he decreed that a census should be taken. Who could remember when such commerce had hit the village?

No, it is doubtful that anyone mentioned the couple's arrival or wondered about the condition of the girl. They were too busy. The day was upon them. The day's bread had to be made. The morning's chores had to be done. There was too much to do to believe that the impossible had occurred. God had entered the world as a baby. God, in human flesh!

Yet, were someone to chance upon the Shepperd's cave on the outskirts of Bethlehem that morning, what a peculiar scene they would behold. The stable is rough like all stables. The ground is hard, the hay scarce. Cobwebs cling to the ceiling and a mouse or two scurries across the dirt floor. – but it often has sheltered the shepherds. -and Joseph, as a boy, played here with his brothers. Off to one side sit a group of shepherds. They sit silently on the floor: perhaps perplexed, perhaps in awe, no doubt in amazement. Their night watch had been interrupted by an explosion of light from heaven and a symphony of angels. God comes to those who have time to hear him, so on this cloudless night he went to simple shepherds.

Near the young mother sits the weary father. If anyone is dozing, he is. He can't remember the last time he sat down. And now that the excitement has subsided a bit, now that Mary and the baby are comfortable, he leans against the wall of the cave and feels his eyes grow heavy. He still hasn't figured it all out. The mystery of the event puzzles him. He doesn't have the energy to wrestle with the questions, but is overwhelmed with the event. What's important is that the baby is fine and that Mary is safe. As sleep



comes, he remembers the name the angel told him to use ... Jesus. "We will call him Jesus."

Wide awake is Mary. My, how young she looks! Her head rests on the soft blanket of Joseph's saddle. The lack of pain in the birth has been eclipsed by wonder. She looks into the face of the baby. Her son. Her Lord. His Majesty. At this point in history, the human being who best understands who God is and what he is doing is a teenage girl in a simple cave. She can't take her eyes off him. Somehow Mary knows she is holding God. So, this is he. As she feeds the baby, she remembers the words of the angel. "His kingdom will have no end." He looks like anything but a king. His face is prunish and red. His cry, though strong and healthy, is still the helpless and piercing cry of a baby. And he is absolutely dependent upon Mary for his well-being. Majesty in the midst of the mundane. Holiness in a simple cave. Divinity entering the world on the floor of a stable, through the womb of a teenager (about a 9th grader) and in the presence of a carpenter. She touches the face of the infant-God. How long was your journey! This baby had overlooked the universe. These simple clothes keeping him warm were the robes of eternity. His golden throne room had been abandoned in favor of a simple cave. And heavenly angels were replaced with kind, simple but bewildered shepherds.

Meanwhile, the city hums. The merchants are unaware that God has visited their planet. The innkeeper would never believe that he had just sent God into the cold night. People would have scoffed (like today) at anyone who told them the Messiah lay in the arms of a teenager on the outskirts of their village. They were all too busy to even consider the possibility. Those who missed God's arrival that night missed it not because of evil acts or malice; no, they missed it because they simply weren't looking. Little has changed in the last two thousand years, has it? From -"God Came Near" by Max Lucado

Old Irish Blessing: *"May love and peace be the first to lift the latch on your door and the Christ Child be guided to your home by the light of your heart!"*

Irish Christmas Prayer: *"The love of God upon you, the peace of God within you. The grace of God beside you, the joy of God surround you!"*

"Lord, what made you so small?" St. Bernard of Clairvaux's ecstatic response was,

"It was love!"

The wonder of Christmas is that the God who dwelt among us now can dwell within us. The fire inside us comes from the way God made us, namely, TO CRAVE THE INFINITE AND to keep everything else in its proper place.



A DROP OF RAIN. A BIT OF SUN

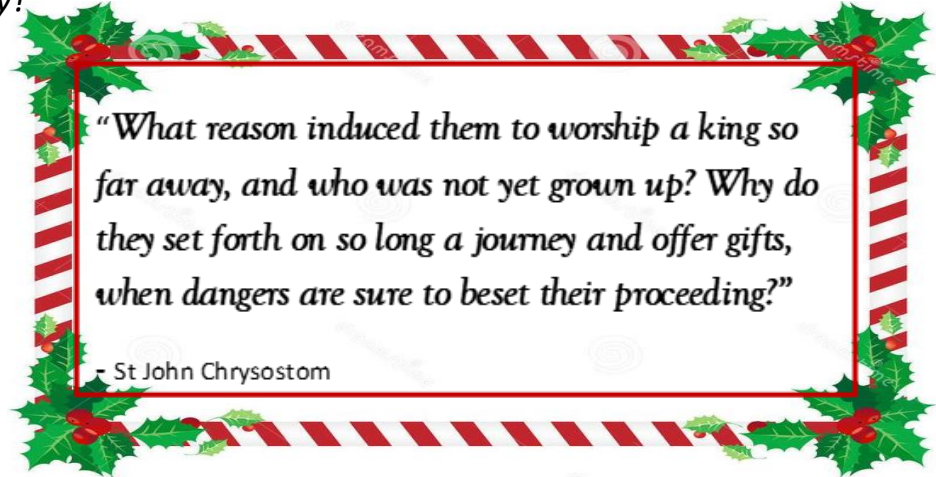
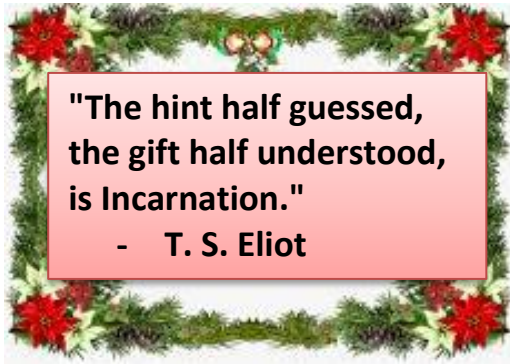
SHARON'S CHRISTMAS PRAYER She was five, sure of the facts. and recited them with slow solemnity convinced every word was revelation. She said they were so poor they had only peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to eat and they went a long way from home without getting lost.

The lady rode a donkey. The man walked and the baby was inside the lady. They had to stay in a stable with an ox and an ass (hee-hee) but the Three Rich Men found them because a star lited the roof. Shepherds came and you could pet the sheep but not feed them.

Then the baby got borned. And do you know who he was? Her quarter eyes inflated to silver dollars. The baby was God And she jumped in the air whirled round, dove into the sofa and buried her head under the cushion which is the only proper response to the Good News of the Incarnation. -JOHN SHEA



"DAT BABY JESUS - HE MAKE ME LAUGH" Brennan Manning, in his book, *The Relentless Tenderness of Jesus*, tells of an experience he had at an airport. It was just before Christmas and he was in the Chicago airport waiting to get a flight to Texas for a week-end retreat. But because of a severe storm, he and thousands of others were not going anywhere. The flights were all delayed. Public address systems were blaring, people were at the ticket counter demanding a projected departure time, children were crying, some people were just sitting and staring. Then he noticed a middle-aged black woman cradling a child in her arms and laughing. Manning asked her, *"Would you mind telling me why you're so happy?"*



A WOMAN DREAMED SHE WALKED INTO A BRAND-NEW SHOP IN THE MARKETPLACE AND, TO HER SURPRISE, FOUND GOD BEHIND THE COUNTER. *"WHAT DO YOU SELL HERE?"* SHE ASKED, *"EVERYTHING YOUR HEART DESIRES,"* SAID GOD. HARDLY DARING TO BELIEVE WHAT SHE WAS HEARING, THE WOMAN DECIDED TO ASK FOR THE BEST THINGS A HUMAN BEING COULD WISH FOR. *"I WANT PEACE OF MIND AND LOVE AND HAPPINESS AND WISDOM AND FREEDOM FROM FEAR,"* SHE SAID. THEN AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT, SHE ADDED, *"NOT JUST FOR ME. FOR EVERYONE ON EARTH."* GOD SMILED, *"I THINK: YOU'VE GOT ME WRONG, MY DEAR",* HE SAID. *"WE DON'T SELL FRUITS HERE. ONLY SEEDS."*



TWENTY-ONE QUESTIONS FOR MARY

1. What was it like teaching Him how to pray?
2. Who was His best friend?
3. How did you feel



when you lost Him in the Temple for three days?

4. When He bumped His head, how did He respond?
5. Did you ever think, *That's God eating my soup?*
6. Did He like to go swimming?
7. What were you thinking when you changed His diaper?
8. How did you feel when you were teaching Him to use a fork or spoon?
9. Did He do well in school?

10. How did he act when He got his first haircut?
11. Did He ever come home with a black eye?
12. How did He respond when He saw other kids giggling during the service at the synagogue?
13. Did He have any pets? What were his favorite games?
14. Did the thought ever occur to you that the God to whom you were praying was asleep under your own roof?
15. Did He have any friends by the name of Judas?
16. What did He and His cousin John talk about as kids?
17. What was it like watching Him pray?
18. How did you feel when you received Him in Communion after He returned to His Father? What did you say to Him in those precious moments?
19. How did He do with the girls as a teen-ager?
20. Did He like to climb trees? -tell jokes? -skim rocks on the water? - take a bath? -comb His hair?
21. Did He ever spit out His peas? (Figs, more probably)

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS: The Blessed Mother is the only woman mentioned in the Quran. Mary's Islamic titles include SAIMAH (she who fasts) and SIDDIQAH (she who confirms the truth). The Quran describes the angels as saying, "O Mary! God has chosen you and purified you-chosen you above all women of all nations of the world."

"Mary is the mother of Jesus and the Mother of us all." "The veneration of Mary is inscribed in the very depths of the human heart." Martin Luther. And again, Martin Luther called Mary, "the highest woman and the noblest gem in Christianity after Christ." and described her as "nobility, wisdom and holiness personified."



Mother Theresa said she often prayed thus: *"Mary, Mother of Jesus, please be a mother to me NOW."*

If you have Netflix: "Sister Claire" and "Full of Grace" will touch your heart.



Mary's Field is now on YouTube. Everyday a short video will be uploaded to help nourish your heart and strengthen your spirit during these difficult times. Type "YouTube Mary's Field" into the Bing.com search engine or "Mary's Field" into the Youtube.com search to find our channel.

"THERE IS SUCH RICHNESS AND GOODNESS IN THE NATIVITY THAT IF WE SHOULD SEE AND DEEPLY UNDERSTAND, WE SHOULD BE DISSOLVED IN PERPETUAL JOY." - MARTIN LUTHER

"Make ready for Christ the Savior", shouts Thomas Merton, "whose smile, like lightning, sets free the song of everlasting glory that now sleeps in your paper flesh; like dynamite." WOW!!!



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