

## **“Christmas Morn”**

### **Brief Message for Christmas Day, December 25, 2022**

It is strange, I automatically associate nighttime with the birth of Christ. Somehow, my obstinate mind claims it knows for a fact that Christ was born past the sunset - when the star of Bethlehem could be seen against a dark firmament and angels illumined an otherwise nocturnal sky. Somehow, I believe that God snuck into this world when everybody was asleep and hardly anyone noticed. I'm convinced of it.

And then, with every one of Mary's contractions the child of God moved from the warmth of his mother's womb into a rather cold time and place. With every labor pang, God confirmed his own vulnerable humanity. With every exhausted push from Mary's strained body, God flexed his muscles to face what had become of his beloved world. He arrived in full flesh, naturally at the darkest hour. That is how I picture it. Tell me, when else would the light that came to shine in the darkness appear?

But now we are coming together on Christmas morning when the candle wax from our late-night services has dried, when the sun shines brightly through our windows and the magic of the story is put under the sobering reality of a new day - and a cold one as it is! It's the time of day when baby Jesus might have woken up for the second time, wanting to be fed, when the animals in the shelter stirred from the sunlight and wanted out. Perhaps it was the time when Joseph decided to meet his relatives to tell them about his new family member. And that sets the whole story in a totally different light. Seen in the light of the morning sun, they had challenges on their hands: keeping this precious little being alive, timing their departure just right so it would be safe, food on the table... lots of daytime worries. Just like some people I know... Day time worries!

And while they were tending to the chores before them, the things that had occurred the night before continued to work their magic deep in their souls. The Christmas story singles out Mary as the one who was feeding on the sacred story from the night before even as the infant was feeding on her own breast. Luke writes, “But Mary treasured all these things

and pondered them in her heart.” Perhaps Joseph too was processing the things that had happened quietly while he tended to some practical things. You should never underestimate quiet men!

And so, these characters invite us to get good nutritional value out of the Christmas story by not forgetting it too soon, not checking it off the list like another thing we needed to do for the holidays. These characters want to linger among us, stay in the house of our soul for a while. Yes, they would like to create a shelter for the Christ child deep inside of us, a place where God’s new life is nurtured. Christ came into this world to stay.

I would like to close this morning with a short spiritual poem by Meister Eckhart who was a medieval German mystic with extraordinary spiritual insight. You will find the theme of God’s birth in this little poem, but not necessarily in the ways you thought about it before:

**All beings are words of God,  
His music, his art.**

**Sacred books we are, for the infinite camps  
In our souls.**

**Every act reveals God and expands his Being.  
I know that may be hard to comprehend.**

**All creatures are doing their best  
To help God in his birth of Himself.**

**Enough talk for the night.  
He is laboring in me;**

**I need to be silent for a while,**

**Worlds are forming in my heart.**

Meister Eckhart