

From our Churches

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Crowning Glory

A Christmas Eve Reading

Her tousled hair lay flat against her sweaty forehead. The pains were evenly spaced now. One every three minutes. She strained. Ohh, that was a bad one. Fully dilated? Was she fully dilated now? Oh Lord she hoped she was. Come on child. Just a bit more and then the push. Wasn't that what her mother had cautioned? "Wait. And then push. You'll know when the time is right. But then, not all at once."

The man in the shadows was at a loss. His eyes flitted around the room looking for a tool or some sort of device to help with the transition from womb to world. But nothing in that barn stood out. He went to wash ... At least he could catch.

Coming back, he steeled himself for a look. "Great, isn't this just great? I've hardly even held her hand all through our brief courtship and here I am at the portal of birth about to catch her child."

Yes, her child. This seemed so weird. But the angel said it was okay. It was her child and also his. From courtship to full blown pregnancy and now this. He was on a crash course in becoming a parent.

"What will it be next week? He'll be apprenticing as my carpentry assistant?"

Yep, it was coming all too fast...

Ooooooh. That was a strong one, she thought. The pressure of the head was making itself known. Time to readjust..... Ow! And, and, and nowPUSH!

All at once the head was crowning. The king was emerging.

Breathe. Yes, breathe.

"Come on Mary, you can do it. I have faith."

She looked at him with a distant, contemplative look.

“That is one of the nicest things anyone has ever said to me,” she thought in an instant.
“Yes, he is a good man....”

Ohhhhhh. That one was almost beyond what she thought pain could be.

“Why, Eve? Why did you take that bite and sentence all of your daughters to such agony?”

She was likely not the first one to ask that question.

He saw the top of the baby’s head. Little did he know the gates were about to unhinge and the grand entry be made.

But they did.

First the head, then a slight rotation andand then... everything at once.

His eyes were wide open and wild.

“Wow..... a boy! Right here in my hands!”

And then it was the child’s turn to speak. At volume. Just one note. And loud. Enough to make the barn denizens shift to have a look at the miracle squirming in their midst.

And then, just as suddenly, when his lungs had clearedsilence.

Mary instructed Joseph what to do next. First the cord. Then the placenta. And wraps. Oh yes, where were they???

“In the saddle Joe, swaddling cloths – left side, rear-most compartment.”

He had laid the child on her partially collapsed belly, just shy of her concealed breast.

She gazed at his tininess and pulled him close. Squinting, the babe made eye contact with the vessel of his delivery. She smiled, and it seemed that he did too.

What had been the angel’s words? “Greetings, favoured one, the Lord is with you!” Yes, he was and is with me, Mary thought.

Despite the family’s questions and community’s ridicule,
Despite the back pain and kicks and now this stretch of pain....the Lord was present.
With life, a new....

As she lay back against the stall door with child now latched on, the same words she spoke many months ago came back with clarity:

“ My soul exalts the Lord. And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he has regard for the humble state of his hand-maiden; for behold, from this time on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is his name.

Yesholy is his name..... Jesus.