The Nativity of the Lord
December 25
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Feast of Jesus

The stable was small, dirty, and smelled of animals. Joseph was worried. Mary was about to give birth, and, try as he might, he could not find a room in any of the inns. Then, he had remembered the stable in Bethlehem, and so here Mary would have her baby.

Mary’s gentle eyes fell on Joseph, and they calmed the worries of his heart. Her gaze was filled with peace and trust because she saw the Father’s hand in all things. She glanced at the wooden manger and their loyal donkey munching on the straw. In this humble place, the Son of God would be born.

Her heart was filled with the mystery of God’s ways. His Son had not chosen to be born among the princes of the world, in luxury or riches; nor among the scholars of the world, with their scrolls and parchment. The Son of God had chosen to be born among the poorest of the poor. He would be born of Mary, God’s lowly handmaid, and raised by Joseph, a humble carpenter.

Mary gave birth to Jesus, and the tiny infant nestled in her arms, close to her heart. Joseph bowed protectively over mother and child, and the warm light of God’s love filled Mary’s and Joseph’s hearts with the gifts of joy and peace. They laid Jesus in the manger, and over the stable, a radiant star shone in the nighttime sky.

Soon, shepherds burst upon the Holy Family, full of excitement to see the newborn Jesus. They told Mary that they had been watching their sheep out in the fields when there suddenly appeared a majestic host of angels singing, “Glory to God in the highest.” An angel had told them where they would find the Savior, the Messiah whom God had promised them. So with great haste, they had come to Bethlehem, and here they had found Jesus by the sign the angel had given them: an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in the manger.

Mary and Joseph were amazed by the shepherds’ story, and Mary reflected on their words, keeping them close in her heart. Her baby was the greatest gift of love a mother ever could receive, but she also knew that Jesus was God’s gift of love for the whole world. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life” (John 3:16). Dear baby Jesus, let the light of your love fill my heart with the gift of joy and peace!