

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child



You can see the motion can't you? A mother laying her child in a crib...or on a bed... It doesn't matter what nationality you imagine her, it is a universal movement: a mother laying down her child. Like so many mothers before and after her, Mary laid her child down. Maybe it was to make faces at him and make him laugh, maybe to change his soiled diaper, maybe it was because she just needed a break. We don't know why, but she laid him down.

Like the familiar motion, the child also appears to be familiar. His surroundings certainly didn't suggest the role he would play in this world. Like many mothers in this world, Mary laid her babe down to rest in a borrowed, make-shift bed and away from home. I'm sure he looked like any of the children you may find in some refugee camp or in a downtown city shelter on a cold winters night: a child in limbo, a stranger.

Yet around this babe the world was stirring and whispering until it burst with light and song. The star shone brightly, beaming the good news. The plains and the hills could not hold back the glorious news. The celestial and the ordinary joined the proclamation: angels, shepherds, and wise men joined in the chorus.

Who knew, as she laid down the babe, what was to come? Those that Scripture recounts being present at Jesus' birth spoke beyond their understanding of what was to come, of Who this child was and is to be.

Have you considered what it was like after the burst of angelic song? When the star stopped shining so brightly? When the last of the shepherd's sheep was rounded up and shooed out of the stable? When only the scent and glint of the wisemen remained? When those moments were gone and Mary gently laid her child?

Isn't Jesus remarkable? Fully God and fully human—one moment the angels burst over his coming, the next so normal as a mother laying down her child. So it is with "God with us". And from that moment at the meager manger, the story unfolded, a day at a time—lived just the way you and I live most days. And slowly, but surely, this child who was laid lived out a life—cared for people, taught and instructed, gathered friends around him, struggled with some, healed, laughed and cried, loved and felt loss—and then he died the most notable death and rose from the grave so that this child who was laid in the manger, became the Savior, "no more a stranger" for so many.

"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)