



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

December 25, 2022

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

Christmas Day: Luke 2:1-20

I love the Sanctified Art image for Christmas (right). The artist was pregnant at the time of creating this piece, and I believe she captured something of the birth of Christ that is often ignored. We sing “Silent Night,” and “Away in the Manger.” We capture the moment in small figures of white porcelain and place them on an end table. Even the gospel writers make it sound as if the birth of Jesus was a simple affair. The truth is that birthing a child is a messy, sweaty, bloody, tearful affair. That is the beauty of Rev. Garrity’s artwork.

We often think of Mary and Joseph in isolation, with maybe a few shepherd visitors after the baby is laid down for a rest (for as the songs says, “no crying he makes”). Our cultural image of the birth of Jesus is that they were in some barn, isolated from people, pushed onto the outskirts of society, surrounded by animals and shepherds.

The hands of the image reveal another story. The Common English version of the Bible reveals that the phrase “there was no room for them at the inn,” could have been translated “there was no room for them in the guestroom.” This implies that they were in a home that was overcrowded with people. The story says that people had to return to their ancestral homes. So Joseph and Mary may have been in a familial home that had too many other visitors for them to be in the guestroom. The hands of the image could be Joseph, other family members or the town midwife.

We do not have to tell a story of isolation and fear. Instead, we can tell a story of Christmas that includes Jesus being born into a home surrounded by love and support.

The image we have here is not one of “Silent Night,” or “Away in a Manger.” There is nothing away or silent about this moment. This is a deeply human moment. The birth of Jesus would have included screams, worry, and agony. It would have included women guiding the child into the world. It would have included a young mother laboring for hours with sweat and tears. It would have included the ecstatic moment of first breath, loud shriek, and overwhelming relief and joy. It would have included wiping off the blood and fluid, cutting an umbilical cord, and holding the tiny infant close to her breast.

The birth of Jesus was a miracle. Just like every other birth. It was dangerous. Just like every other birth. It was spectacular



In this image, as if looking past a curtain, we peer into this threshold moment when excruciating pain gives way to ecstatic joy as Mary draws her baby to her chest and he takes his first breath. As Mary holds her baby, additional hands reach in to support them both. Maybe these are the hands of strangers, of Joseph, or of a midwife who was summoned. Perhaps they are simply the hands of angels.

— from the artist statement for “How God Shows Up” by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity | @sanctifiedart

and mundane and messy and painful. Just like every other birth. In invite you to gaze at this image for a moment. Imagine whose hands are reaching out to the child. Image your own hands there in the moment.

The birth of Jesus was the birth of the eternal Word into the world. It is the moment that the Love of God became flesh. It was a moment of intense humanity, intense ecstasy, and extreme vulnerability. That is the God we worship—one who became so vulnerable that only love could survive.