

# Christmas Day – I morning

**Isaiah 9:2-7**

**Psalm 96**

**Titus 2:11-14**

**Luke 2:1-14(15-20)**

**Focus:**

**Function:**

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With apologies;

‘Twas the morning of Christmas,

and all through the house

Not a thing was settled, not even our mouse

The stocking were strewn

‘cross the room without care

a sign that St Nick had surely been there

The children all bedazzled,

with presents galore

As half eaten sugar plums lay stuck to the floor  
And mamma with new slippers,  
and I my new cap  
Are just about done for - after all that ...

That,

or the idea for that  
was the second thing  
that flew through my mind  
as I pondered a second sermon  
on Christmas readings  
barely 12 hours after the first.

The song *There's got to be a morning after*  
was the first.

You remember

Maureen McGovern's hit single from  
the *Poseidon Adventure*

~ the 1972 version.

It starts like this ...

There's got to be a morning after  
If we can hold on through the night  
We have a chance to find the sunshine  
Let's keep on looking for the light

Oh, can't you see the morning after?  
It's waiting right outside the storm  
Why don't we cross the bridge together  
And find a place that's safe and warm? <sup>i</sup>

You get it ...

Both inspirations

are grounded in the thought  
that we have a far to pristine view  
of the stable where Jesus is born.

To begin with birth is messy,

I've never seen a Nativity scene  
that was messy.

Remember this story is set **in** a stable

so ~ where's all the ~~ stable stuff?

Yea, I know there's donkey,

and a cow,

and sheep,

but where's all the ~ stable stuff?

the tools,

the piles of left over

odds and ends,

the smell,

the –

well the signs

of a working stable?

Now pristine is okay,

it has its place;

but, ~

if we are going to allow ourselves

to be transformed  
by the mystery of Christmas,  
I rather suspect  
that pristine won't help.

Think about it,  
this story is a remarkable  
emotional contrast.

Luke spends all of 2,  
rather bland,  
verses on Jesus' birth.

But we all know that child birth

is - well - traumatic.

I remember my daughters' births;

I was exhausted,

and all I did was

watch

and try to remember

breathing patterns.

I also remember Angie's face,

after our girls were born

and it shown of peace

born of exhaustion.

I believe Mary also knew

peace ~ born of exhaustion.

Typically new moms go home

and begin a new life

with one more person in the family.

Not Mary,

she doesn't even get through the night

before strange shepherds

begin to show up

telling remarkable stories,

of angel choirs,

with a remarkable message

good news for all people:

born this day,

in the city of David,

is a Savior,

who is the Messiah,

the Lord.

This will be a sign for you:

you will find a child

wrapped in

bands of cloth

and lying in a manger.

And here she is,

her baby

wrapped in bands of cloth

laying in a manger.

Luke writes:

*[that] Mary treasured all these words  
and pondered them in her heart.*

By themselves,

they are a lot to ponder.

Together with what Gabriel told her,

and experiencing the truth

of those words,

I sense Mary is full of excitement

born of anticipation.

Peace ~ born of exhaustion

over against

excitement born of anticipation,  
a remarkable emotional contrast;  
and there is nothing pristine  
that emerges from the tension  
between them.

Peace born of exhaustion

leaves one so devoid of life's junk  
that we can perceive  
the divine mystery,

that was incarnate  
in Jesus' birth.

Peace born of exhaustion

leaves one so empty

that we may be transformed

by the same divine mystery.

Excitement

born of anticipation,

born of divine revelation

is **compelling**;

so much so,

we may find ourselves,

drawn,

perhaps driven

to be a part of

to be present

when revelation comes to be.

Such a divinely compelling force,

is also transforming.

The remembrance of Jesus birth,

is not an invitation

into a pristine recollection

of a quaint ancient mysterious birth.

Not at all.

The remembrance of Jesus' birth

is to dare

to risk

a journey into

the tension emergent from

Peace ~ born of exhaustion

over against

excitement born of anticipation.

The remembrance of Jesus' birth

is to dare

to risk

a journey out of

an unsettled house

of stocking strewn rooms,

beset with distractions galore

stuck to the floor

seeking the light

you've been looking for;

The remembrance of Jesus' birth

is to dare

to risk

a journey into

the transforming presence  
of the living God,  
who loves us.

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<sup>i</sup> : <http://www.elyrics.net/read/m/maureen-mcGovern-lyrics/the-morning-after-lyrics.html> )