



MAKING ROOM FOR CHRISTMAS

December 2021

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Luke 2:6-7

We're all familiar with this story. We know about the innkeeper who must have been too busy or simply too insensitive to Joseph and Mary's needs at this crucial time in the young couple's lives—at a time when Mary was ready to give birth.

Wasn't there something more he could have done for them? Couldn't he somehow, somewhere, have made room for them inside his inn? Why did Jesus have to be born in a stable surrounded by smelly farm animals?

I remember how I wondered, years ago, if I myself couldn't make room for Jesus in a better way than I had in the past. "Am I like that innkeeper? Too busy, too frazzled, too distracted from what's important?"

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Seems like every year when Christmas loomed on the horizon, I started feeling stressed, depressed, anxious. I dreaded what would be required of me. The too-muchness, the rushing. It was all so overwhelming! At times I wanted to escape, yet Christmas inescapably came.

“I just want peace, God! Help me, please, to find peace in the midst of all this!”

And yet, at the same time, I had high ideals as to how a Christmas should be properly celebrated. Don’t we all? Might I actually have been idolizing the holiday instead of worshipping the One who it’s all for? Does everything really need to be so perfect?

My wish for Christmas was to make room for Jesus in my home. I decided to try lowering my expectations, enjoying the small things—only the most precious things, rather than overdoing.

I remember writing the following during times when I had many people to buy gifts for and could easily shop, and easily bake:

“In an effort to escape the hurriedness that surrounds all of us so much, I will avoid the craziness of the stores as much as I can. I won’t buy as many gifts but will try making some in the comfort of my home instead. I will bake cookies because I know how much that puts me in a celebratory mood. My husband and I will, in a leisurely way, decorate the house while we listen to Christmas carols, reflecting on our past as we admire old ornaments!”

That was how it was years ago. Today, when I’m so much older, escaping the stress is no longer a factor in our Christmas celebrations. There are less gifts to buy. No longer the energy or the need to bake.

Life has changed. It often saddens me. But it isn’t really so bad. We now have room for Jesus in our home. All we have to do is ask him in.

“Come, Lord Jesus, come.”

marja