The Christmas Dove

Written by Laurie Waite Flores

Once upon a time a long time ago, a beautiful white Mourning Dove sat in the rafters of a stable. She was quietly sitting on a nest of hay, grass, sticks and soft downy feathers. Under her body and warm wings was a single and very beautiful Alabaster colored egg about the size of a ping pong ball. It was perfectly flawless in its coloring, size and shape. She had been sitting in this nest every night for the past 14 days and her companion who sat on the egg during the daylight hours, now sat next to her and leaned on her wing to offer comfort. They knew the time was near and that soon their little one would be joining their family forever.

The air was crisp and cool and the night sky was full of bright twinkling stars that glittered in the darkness. In the quiet stable below the cattle and sheep were quietly munching on hay from a manger, a wooden box that held their evening meal.

As she sat there quietly contemplating the arrival of their precious baby, a rustle was heard outside the stable door. A few moments later a small gray donkey walked into their home being led by a kind but worried faced looking man. With him was a young and beautiful but very tired and weary woman riding on the donkey's back. When they reached the center of the stable the young man gently helped his sweetheart down off the donkey's back and helped her lay down in a quiet corner of the stable. He tried to make her as comfortable as possible.

The Mourning Dove and her companion carefully watched the scene below as their newly arrived visitors quietly got settled. The woman, they noticed, was also expecting her first born baby and it was obvious that her time would be soon.

As they sat high in the rafters above this young couple, the beautiful Mourning Dove noticed a bright light streaming in from the doorway and windows of the stable. As she and her companion gazed out toward the heavens they saw the most incredible site as a large

sparkly star appeared in the night sky. Its starlight beams touched every house, tree and grassy plain. The mother dove looked far in the distance and could see the night shepherds standing in the field carefully watching over their flock of sleeping sheep.

Suddenly a brighter light lit up the night sky and surrounded the tired gentlemen. Then she noticed that there was an angel slowly descending out of the sky. Soon this heavenly being was standing right next to the frightened shepherd. She faintly heard the angel say, *“Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”* The angel then told the frightened shepherds to leave their flock of sleeping lambs and go into the city.

At that moment the Mourning Dove heard a soft faint cry. The distinct cry of a newborn baby. She looked down and saw the beautiful young woman gently wrapping her newborn son in a soft white cloth and gently cradling Him in her arms. She was cooing to her little angel and softly singing him a lullaby. The cattle were quiet and the little lambs gingerly walked over to see the new arrival.

Then the sky lit up again and the sounds of an angelic choir filled the skies.

A few hours later, the newborn baby and his mother were peacefully sleeping. Her companion had carefully cleaned out the wooden manger and placed their precious little one in the safety of this rustic cradle. He stood nearby watching his new family with a smile on his face and pride in his heart. The scene below was peaceful and all was quiet.

As the Mourning Dove observed the tender moments below, she began to feel movement under her body. It was her little one preparing to emerge into the world. She woke her companion and soon tiny cracks began to appear on the sides of her perfect egg. First a beak, then a head, then a wing and finally the sides of the shell fell away and out emerged a beautiful baby dove. Its eyes were perfectly round

and lovingly looked up at his mother. She cradled him under her warm wing and cooed a soft song and sang him a lullaby.

All was right, All was calm. Everything this young woman and Mourning Dove ever wanted was right there in that humble room. They were surrounded by angels. Surrounded with light and most importantly they were surrounded by love. That night, that sacred night, their greatest dreams and wishes had come true and they were at PEACE. For that night, they had become MOTHERS, the greatest gift and wish they could ever ask for. *“And they kept all these things and pondered them in their hearts,”* and were filled with gratitude and great joy for the miracle of motherhood.