

Dorothy's Song
Christmas Eve, 2016
Mary Koon

Each year at Christmas we tell the story of Mary, Joseph and the baby. The story of the angels, the shepherds and the star. But, I wonder about all the animals that were there on that special night.

Certainly, the donkey that rode into Bethlehem was tired and maybe a little achy after carrying Mary for so long. And then, the cow who gave up her feed trough may have been just a little put out to share her dinner plate with a human baby!

You know, in some manger scenes, if you look carefully, you might see a little bird way up high in the rafters, looking down on the whole scene.

This is the story of Dorothy, who was there the night that Jesus was born. Dorothy is a dove. Doves, with their soft white feathers, are a sign of hope and peace. Oh, look, here's Dorothy now...

Hope (Mary Koon's daughter) is the young dove:

I love to sing and fly!!!

Who could imagine that a bird, a dove, with an olive branch in its mouth could become the image for peace for the generations? But it has! Birds have always had a special relationship with God. After all, we have more colors and shapes than you humans, we can go farther and faster with wings than you can with those legs, and our voices...well, I will admit that the choir here at Oak Grove comes close to the sweet sounds of larks, but really, when it comes to singing – we rule!

My family comes from a long line of peace-criers, love –singers and baby comforters. Here's how it all started: my grandmother's grandmother's grandmother's grandmother's -- you get it, right? She was there on that big boat – what do you call it???? An ark? You know the one, with all the animals. It smelled really bad, and oh, my, what a racket!!!! After being closed inside for 40 days and nights – my great-great-great-great (and so on) grandmama was released to see if there was dry land. She flew out, and then returned to the boat once without a thing, since the water was too high, then again, she flew out and came back with an olive branch in her mouth, because the water didn't quite cover the tree, and then, not long after, she didn't return, but flew off to start a family and see the world. From that time on, we doves

represented God's hope and promise for a world where people would live together as one. A world of peace.

We sang and flew for hundreds of years, but eventually our songs began to sound more like sadness than comfort because of the things we saw. It grew harder to sing joyfully. From up in the sky, we watched people hurting each other. We watched children go to bed hungry, parents worrying and people fighting with swords. But, still, we tried.

These days, I keep looking for God in a world that is filled with pain. I feel like I've run out of hope – has God forgotten us? I want to sing, I need to sing. But it is nearly impossible when there's sadness in your heart. Even people who sing the blues have a glimmer of hope that helps form the notes.

My dad tells me that our song used to bring delight babies and grandpas alike. That just the sight of the dove flying in the air, or lighting on a branch, would make children giggle and grandmas smile. When they would see us, folks would stop what they were doing to reflect on God's great love, and they might begin to pray for peace, or remember to be kind to their neighbor. I hardly sing anymore...my heart just isn't in it. How can a creature sing when there is no hope? How can a bird call out God's peace when there is so much anger and hurt?

Yes, flying around here is beautiful. It's green and lush, with plenty to eat. I love my home, and my family. My brothers are annoying, of course, but even when they make fun of my small wings I love them. They only tease me because I have a better voice than they do. I'll grow, you know...since the ark, we girls have always been late bloomers.

For days now people have been streaming into Bethlehem. They are coming in by the camel-load...men and women, boys and girls, bringing noise, dirt, donkeys and cooking fires. The streets are crowded, and the Roman soldiers shout and shove people. Why, one was yelling at a child! Say, was that you??? (Children will be sitting up with us)

I saw a couple ride into our village a short while ago, and I recognized the young woman – she was riding on a donkey! I've seen her before...it was a night I'll never forget.

Almost a year ago, I'd been sitting all day, and I needed to stretch my wings. I longed to fly free, to sing a new song! I was still small and able to rise above the crowds. I

thought that maybe, just maybe, a boy or girl, a grandma or grandpa would look up and see my white feathers. My soft body. If they did, I'd sneak out a little coo, just to let them know that they are loved. And so, I took off...

That day, I flew farther and higher than I'd ever gone before and it felt really great...but I was far from home. Night was coming and it was getting dark. I was frightened, and lonely, so I lit on a tree outside a humble home. I sat shaking in the cold, missing my parents and hoping for daylight...I had just drifted off when a sound like wings woke me up. I flew closer to sit on the windowsill. What I saw confused and amazed me. A small room in the house was lit with a light that I'd never seen before – and no fire or candles were burning! The light was actually coming from a creature – tall and luminous. He stood over a young girl. He was almost transparent, and extensions that almost resembled WINGS grew from his back. He looked at the young girl and said, "Don't be frightened, Mary!?" He said that anything is possible with God.

Anything? Even peace?

Have you ever heard of such a thing?

Oh, this young girl looked scared. I was too stunned to squeak, coo, or make a sound of comfort...but I wanted to. How could I, part of a long line of messengers of peace, not speak up when I had the chance???

The winged creature said something about a baby, a person that would change the world...

And then the large, shining creature was gone. It was quiet except for the crying of that girl, Mary. Her tears dried as she prayed, and then she had the most beautiful look on her face. She started to sing...it was a song of comfort, of love, of resistance. It sounded like she was singing with her whole heart, and it was beautiful and heart-breaking. What could it mean? Who was this baby who was to be born? When would it happen?

When I awoke the next morning, I thought that it was all a dream. A human-like creature with wings? Filled with light?

But from that night on, my heart seemed to beat faster and I looked for that girl everywhere. What would happen to her? When would that baby arrive? It seemed that my eyes were open and ready to see God. And then I saw it...glimpses that God was around -- a hungry man receiving food from a stranger. Children sharing

their playthings. A woman singing with joy as she cooked for her family. Maybe God is up to something.

And then, this girl, Mary, rode today. I must go and find her...

Come with me. Could she be here? No. Here? No.

Wait...I see something...there's that special kind of light coming out of that..that...cave. That's the same light that that creature brought into the house, only it's glow is warmer now.

(MOVE TO BIG CRECHE)

Up here in the rafter, I can see everything. It's her! It's her! Oh, and her baby...it's a boy...and around him is that light.

This isn't frightening, this is wonderful. Look, see how Mary holds her baby. And there are shepherds here, too, and more of those human-like-winged creatures. That baby is so special...so much like God.

Hope! Hope is here – I feel it, I see it! My heart wants to sing, it is so full! Oh, look...it's Mary...she's singing to the baby...a sound so sweet, so filled with hope...it was the song I remember from that night. And, now, I want to sing with her, to soothe that baby of light to sleep, too.

I know! Let's all sing to the baby of Peace, born in Bethlehem tonight...

Congregation sings "Away in a Manger" as ending.