



UNIVERSITY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**Christmastide
Devotionals**

**The Twelfth Day of Christmas
January 5, 2021
"O Magnum Mysterium"**

*O magnum mysterium, et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum, iacentem in praesepe!
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Iesum Christum. Alleluia!*

O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the newborn Lord, lying in a manger!
Blessed is the virgin whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord, Jesus Christ. Alleluia!

Many of us are familiar with this gorgeous piece of music, and we know how it seems to reach in and grab hold of and squeeze our hearts, with its beauty, sadness, and joy. We wonder how and why that is, and it is in part the talent of the composer combined with the working of the Spirit. But it is also the composer's intention and craft in creating music that moves us. Mr. Lauridsen talks about that in this video:

Listen: Morten Lauridsen (Composer)

He speaks of being moved by visual art, "Still Life with Lemons, Oranges and a Rose," painted by Francisco de Zurbaran in 1633, and his desire to set the two-line text in an uncomplicated way that still has profound effect and spotlights the Virgin Mary.

I can offer no better devotional than his description of his thinking behind the writing of this piece. I'll hear and sing it differently in the future, as a result, and I hope you will, too.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for gifted composers who apply their talent, training, and reverence for your Word in the creation of music that moves our hearts, expresses our feelings, and lifts our spirits. Thank you also for the musicians who bring these creations to life so that you may be glorified, and we may be blessed. Amen.

Kim Vitray
Assistant Music Director

Listen: "O Magnum Mysterium"