



2014 AWARDS
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Best Essay
Prayer and Spirituality

Third Place

She Pondered These Things in Her Heart (see Lk 2:51)
Lamb of God

by Jennifer Hubbard

It is the time during Mass where my tears flow steadily:

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

It is then that the pain becomes overwhelmingly raw. The wound that I think has started to heal is suddenly ripped open.

Lambs are innocent, exposed, and vulnerable, and yet they are always protected. My lamb is my Catherine. I knew her cry before it came from her lungs. I knew it was Catherine calling “Mama” even though she was in a room full of children calling out. I knew where she was, even when I couldn’t see her. She is the lamb I knew had been called home before I truly understood what had happened. Just knowing—it is a gift God gave me when he placed her next to my heart for nine months. A gift he gave me when he allowed the quiet beating of our hearts to find rhythm next to each other’s.

It is always a lamb I see when I think of Catherine. She is the lamb that she would nuzzle right beside Mary in the Nativity. She is the lamb that greets us from the pasture as we walk on a foggy spring morning. She is the lamb I had carved into the footstone at her resting place. And now, as

I tuck it into the pages when I close my Bible, it is Catherine that I see walking confidently beside Jesus on her prayer card.

“The Lord is my Shepherd there is nothing I shall want” (Ps 23:1). It was Jesus who was waiting for her as he welcomed his flock. He led her to still waters, and she fears no evil. She is his lamb, innocent and vulnerable—naïve to what the world is capable of. She is sheltered under his vigilant watch; she is whole and is resting peacefully at his feet.

And I too am his lamb. It is myself he has cradled across his shoulders. He knows my heart aches to feel the beating of hers against mine. He acknowledges my cry, even when it hasn’t yet left my lungs. He hears my quiet calling through all the voices and comes to me. I know that he will guide me as I seek his guidance, and that he will answer my voice when I call out. He continues to scoop me up and carry me when the days seem too much. He shows his unending love in the simplest things that are so undeniably Catherine. In doing so he reminds me that his promise has not been broken. He reminds me that one day he will gently lift me from his shoulders and place me beside her. When that day comes, I will close my eyes and relish the quiet rhythm of our beating hearts.

Jennifer Hubbard is a resident of Newtown, CT. The younger of her two children, Catherine Violet, was a victim of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on December 14, 2012.