

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Concert Text

Joy to the World

Joy to the World - Scott Hahn

The Christmas story has an unconventional hero—not a warrior, not a worldly conqueror, not an individual at all, but rather a family. The details of the story always lead us back to that fact. We see the swaddling bands and know they're for a baby, but someone had to do the swaddling. So we have a mother and child. We have a father. We have a household. We read of the child's exile in Egypt, but someone had to take him there—someone had to protect him from bandits along the desert roads—and someone had to work hard to support the mother and baby in a foreign land.

As we listen to these carols that recount the scenes of the Christmas story, let us not be content with the comforts and clichés of Christmas, but reflect deeper on the model of the Holy Family and how they show our own families the path to God.

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

A Shepherd's Lullaby

What Shall We Give Him

A Cradle in Bethlehem

Advent Candlelight Carol

Gloria Gloria Hodie

Joy to the World - Scott Hahn

The family is the key to Christmas. The family is the key to Christianity. Pope Saint John Paul II noted that everything good "passes by way of the family." Since the family is the ordinary setting of human life, he came to share it, redeem it, and perfect it. He made it an image and sacrament of a divine mystery. Salvation itself finds meaning only in familial relations. The truth of Christmas begins with a family.

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Concert Text

Christ Was Born on Christmas Day

Christ was born on Christmas Day in a manger filled with hay;
Sheep and cows around him lay. Christ was born on Christmas Day.

Shepherds heard the song that night as angels all around them bright
Told them of a wondrous sight. Shepherds heard the song that night.

Wise men came with gifts to bring and bowed down to the baby king.
Guided by a star they'd seen, wise men came with gifts to bring.

Christmas Hymn

Hear Mary crooning a lullaby, Ave!
And angels echoing from the sky, Ave!
See Joseph smile with pride and joy,
And whittle a block of wood for a toy
To give to the fair little sleeping Boy, Ave!

Now in the heavens the angels sing. Ave!
All praise to God in the highest bring! Ave!
The shepherds hear the music soar
And gather together lambs from their store
And run to the stable and Christ adore. Ave!

He Is Born

He is born, the holy child, play the oboe and bagpipes merrily!
He is born, the holy child, sing we all of the Savior mild.

Through long ages of the past, prophets have foretold his coming;
Through long ages of the past, Now the time has come at last!

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Concert Text

O how lovely, O how pure is this perfect child of heaven;
O how lovely, O how pure, gracious gift to humankind.

Jesus, Lord of all the world, coming as a child among us,
Jesus, Lord of all the world, grant to us thy heav'nly peace.

Ding Dong, Merrily on High

Ding dong merrily on high, In heav'n the bells are ringing:
Ding dong! verily the sky Is riv'n with angel singing
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!

E'en so here below, below, Let steeple bells be swungen,
And "Io, io, io!" By priest and people sungen
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!

Pray you, dutifully prime Your matin chime, ye ringers,
May you beautifully rhyme Your eve'time song, ye singers
Gloria! Hosanna in excelsis!

Do You Hear What I Hear

Said the night wind to the little lamb,
do you see what I see
Way up in the sky, little lamb,
do you see what I see
A star, a star, dancing in the night
With a tail as big as a kite
With a tail as big as a kite

Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy,
do you hear what I hear
Ringin' through the sky, shepherd boy,

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Concert Text

do you hear what I hear
A song, a song, high above the trees
With a voice as big as the sea
With a voice as big as the sea

Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king,
do you know what I know
In your palace warm, mighty king,
do you know what I know
A Child, a Child shivers in the cold
Let us bring Him silver and gold
Let us bring Him silver and gold

Said the king to the people everywhere,
listen to what I say
Pray for peace, people everywhere!
listen to what I say
The Child, the Child, sleeping in the night
He will bring us goodness and light
He will bring us goodness and light

From the dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council

In his own time, God called Abraham, to make of him a mighty nation. After the patriarchs, he taught his nation through Moses and the prophets to acknowledge himself alone as the living and true God, a provident father and just judge, and to look forward to the promised Savior. So, through the ages, he prepared a way for the Gospel. After speaking *at various times and in different ways through the prophets, God has finally spoken to us in these days through the Son.*

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Concert Text

Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter Zion from “Messiah”

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, thy King cometh unto thee;

He is the righteous Savior, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

– Zechariah 9: 9-10

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain.

O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength;

lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

– Isaiah 40:9; 60:1

From a sermon by Saint Anselm, bishop

Blessed Lady, full and overflowing with grace, all creation receives new life from your abundance. Virgin, blessed above all creatures, through your blessing all creation is blessed, not only creation from its Creator, but the Creator himself has been blessed by creation.

God, then, is the Father of the created world and Mary the mother of the recreated world. God is the Father by whom all things were given life, and Mary the mother through whom all things were given new life. For God begot the Son, through whom all things were made, and Mary gave birth to him as the Savior of the world. Without God's Son, nothing could exist; without Mary's Son, nothing could be redeemed.

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Concert Text

Sweet Was the Song the Virgin Sang

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang,
When she to Bethle'm Juda came,
And was deliver'd of a Son,
That blessed Jesus hath to name.

Lalula, lalula, lalulaby, sweet babe, sang she,
And rocked Him sweetly on her knee.
My Son, and eke a Saviour born,
Who hast vouchsafed from on high
To visit us that were forlorn.

There Is No Rose of Such Virtue

There is no rose of such virtue
As is the rose that bare Jesu; Alleluia.

For in this rose contained was
Heaven and earth in little space;
Res miranda. (thing of wonder)

By that rose we may well see
That He is God in persons three,
Pari forma. (equal in form)

The angels sung the shepherds to:
Gloria in excelsis Deo:
Gaudeamus. (let us rejoice)

Now leave we all this worldly mirth
And follow we this joyful birth;
Transeamus. (let us go)

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Concert Text

Mary the Dawn

This exquisite 20th century text by Fr. Justin Mulcahy, C.P. is most often used in the Liturgy of the Hours. Through many metaphors, the text shows how Mary always leads us to Jesus. American Cathedral musician Charles Thatcher has set the text to a new melody, and has interspersed three Marian hymns – “Lo how a Rose,” “At the Cross her station keeping,” and “Be Joyful, Mary” – that follow Our Lady’s role in the Paschal Mystery.

Mary the dawn, Christ the Perfect Day; Mary the gate, Christ the Heavenly Way!
Mary the root, Christ the Mystic Vine; Mary the grape, Christ the Sacred Wine!
“Lo, how a rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
Of Jesse’s lineage coming, as men of old have sung;
It came a blossom bright, amid the cold of winter, when half-spent was the night.”
Mary the wheatsheaf, Christ the Living Bread;
Mary the rose tree, Christ the Rose blood-red!
Mary the font, Christ the Cleansing Flood;
Mary the cup, Christ the Saving Blood!
Mary, the window, Christ the Light from Light;
Mary the tower, Christ the Banner bright!
Mary the temple, Christ the temple’s Lord;
Mary the shrine, Christ the God adored!
Mary the beacon, Christ the Haven’s Rest;
Mary the mirror, Christ the Vision Blest!
Mary the mother, Christ the mother’s Son
By all things blest while endless ages run. Amen.

From a sermon by Saint Bernard, abbot

The goodness and humanity of God our Savior have appeared in our midst. How could he have shown his mercy more clearly than by taking on himself our condition? For our sake the Word of God became as grass. What better proof could he have given of his love? The lesser he became through his human nature the greater was his goodness; the more he lowered himself for me, the dearer he is to me. The goodness

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Concert Text

and humanity of God our Savior have appeared, says the Apostle. Truly great and manifest are the goodness and humanity of God. He has given us a most wonderful proof of his goodness by adding humanity to his own divine nature.

O Magnum Mysterium

Considered a modern masterwork, “O Magnum Mysterium” is a deeply felt religious statement, at once uncomplicated and unadorned, yet powerful and transformative in its effect upon the listener. The musical themes and phrase shapes have their roots in Gregorian chant, with a constant metric flow and ebb. Worth mentioning is the horror and sorrow of the Virgin Mary, as she was to experience Christ’s death on the cross. Her significance and suffering is portrayed in a single dissonant note on the word “Virgo,” sung in the second section of the piece. “A quiet song of profound inner joy; I wanted this piece to resonate immediately and deeply into the core of the listener, to illumine through sound.” (based on the composer’s reflection)

O great mystery and wondrous sacrament,
that animals should see the
new-born Lord lying in their Manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!

What Star is This

What star is this, with beams so bright,
more lovely than the noonday light?
‘Tis sent to announce a new born King,
Glad tidings of our God to bring.

‘Tis now fulfilled what God decreed,
“From Jacob shall a star proceed;”
And lo! the eastern sages stand
To read in heav’n the Lord’s command.

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Concert Text

The guiding star above is bright;
Within them shines a clearer light,
And leads them on with power benign
To seek the Giver of the sign.

O Jesus, while the star of grace
Impels us on to seek your face,
Let not our slothful hearts refuse
The guidance of your light to use.

To God almighty, heav'nly Light;
To Christ, revealed in splendor bright;
To God the Spirit, now we raise
An endless song of thankful praise.

My Dancing Day

This popular English carol likely dates back to Medieval times. The archaic language of the lyrics and the line "to see the legend of my play" suggests its original use as a play or tableaux that told the story of Jesus' life. Most modern settings, like this one, end with the stanza about Jesus' baptism—the reason we sing this piece today. The original carol includes seven additional stanzas that take us from Jesus' temptation and fasting in the desert (Lent) to his ascension to Heaven (Easter Season).

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance;

Sing, oh, my love!
This have I done for my true love.

Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

Concert Text

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance.
Thus was I knit to man's nature
To call my true love to my dance.

In a manger laid, and wrapped I was
So very poor, this was my chance
Between an ox and a silly poor ass
To call my true love to my dance.

Then afterwards baptized I was;
The Holy Ghost on me did glance,
My Father's voice heard I from above,
To call my true love to my dance.