



# *St. Mary's Christmas Carol Service*

**Church of the Assumption, Magherafelt**

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

*"May the joy of Christmas and the peace which the Birth of the Saviour brings into the world be in your hearts forever." (Pope John Paul II)*

*In the silence of a manger cradle,  
In the stillness of a winter's night  
In the quiet of our waiting hearts,  
Love is born at Christmas.*

*Front cover image designed and painted by Eva Kilpatrick  
(St. Mary's Grammar School, A-Level Art and Religious Studies pupil).*

**Introduction**

**Fr. Gates**

**Welcome**

**Miss U. Burns**  
**(Head of Religious Studies)**

**Opening Prayer**

**Introductory Carol- O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

**T.A. Lacey**  
**Arr. David Willcocks**

*Soloist: Daniel McNamee (Year 14)*

*Senior Choir*

*Orchestra*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
Redeem thy captive Israel.  
That into exile drear is gone  
Far from the face of God's dear Son

Soloist

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel***  
***Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

O come, thou Branch of Jesse draw  
The quarry from the lion's claw  
From the dread caverns of the grave  
From nether hell, they people save

Primary Schools

O come, O come, thou Day spring bright  
Pour on our souls thy healing light;  
Dispel the long night's ling'ring gloom  
And pierce the shadows of the tomb

Senior Choir

O come, thou Lord of David's Key!  
The royal door fling wide and free;  
Safeguard for us the heav'n-ward road,  
And bar the way to death's abode.

Junior Choir and Congregation

## Once In Royal David's City

H. Gauntlett

Soloist: Molly McCloskey (Year 8)

*Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby  
In a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ, her little child.*

He came down to earth from heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And his shelter was a stable,  
And his cradle was a stall:  
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,  
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.  
Not in that poor lowly stable,  
With the oxen standing by,  
We shall see Him; but in heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high;  
Where like stars His children crowned  
All in white shall wait around.

### **The first reading is from Isaiah (9:2 & 9:6-7)**

Reader: Ms D. Gillespie (Principal, St. Mary's Grammar School)

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

## **Behold I stand**

**Anon.**

*Reader: Jake Donnelly (Head Boy)*

When the night is deep  
With the sense of Christmas  
On every breath  
Behold I stand at the door and knock

When the floor is knee deep  
In discarded wrapping paper  
And the new books are open at page one  
And the new toys are already broken  
Behold I stand at the door and knock

When the family is squashed  
Elbow to elbow  
Around the table  
And the furious rush for food is over  
And the only word that can describe the feeling is full  
Behold I stand at the door and knock

And when Christmas is over  
And the television is silent  
For the first time in two days  
And who sent which card to whom  
Is forgotten until next year  
Behold I stand at the door and knock

And when the nation has finished celebrating  
Christmas without Christ  
A birthday  
Without a birth  
The coming of Kingdom  
Without a King  
And when I am  
Forgotten  
*Despised*  
*Rejected*  
*Crucified*

*Behold I stand.*

## **Carol: Candlelight Carol**

**J. Rudder**

*Senior Choir*  
*Orchestra*

## **The second reading is from the Gospel according to Luke (1:26-38)**

*Reader: Roisha Lupari (New Row Primary School)*

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Reader:           The word of the Lord.

**All:**             **Thanks be to God.**

## A Blessing of Angels

J. Rupp

*Readers: Caitlin Gribbin (Anahorish Primary School) and Ben Callan (Holy Family Primary School)*

*If you look into the scriptures, you will find that angels encircled the entire life of Jesus, from the angel's invitation asking Mary to welcome Jesus in her womb to the blessed moment of an angel announcing his being raised from the dead.*

May the angel of the annunciation bless you, inviting you daily to  
Awaken to the God-life within you.

May the angel of Joseph's dreams bless you,  
stirring your spirit to trust the many ways that Mystery whispers to you.

May the angel of birthing bless you,  
calling forth wonder, awe, and gratitude for all that has helped you to become your true self.

May the angel of Bethlehem-songs bless you,  
tickling your soul with laughter and joy,  
heralding hope and good tidings to you.

May the angel of the journey to Egypt bless you,  
guiding and protecting you as you travel the inner and outer  
roads of your life.

May the angel of desert wilderness bless you,  
bringing courage when you experience bleak,  
intense searching and struggle.

May the angel of prayer bless you,  
gathering you closely to the divine Beloved who longs for your embrace.

May the angel of children on the lap of Jesus bless you,  
helping you to see the beauty and freedom of your inner child.

May the angel of the agony in the garden bless you,  
offering you solace in your times of tribulation.

May the angel at the tomb of resurrection bless you with faith,  
assuring your faith and trust that all shall be well.

## Carol- O Little Town of Bethlehem

R. Vaughan

*Senior Choir*

*Junior Choir*

*Orchestra*

*Congregation*

O little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight

For Christ is born of Mary  
And gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love  
O morning stars together  
Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God the King  
And Peace to men on earth

How silently, how silently  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him still,  
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem  
Descend to us, we pray  
Cast out our sin and enter in  
Be born to us today  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell  
O come to us, abide with us  
Our Lord Emmanuel.

### **The third reading is from the Gospel according to Luke (2:1-14)**

*Reader: Anna Gribben (Head Girl)*

Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria and everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."

Reader:                   The word of the Lord.

All:                        **Thanks be to God.**

### **This Christmas**

**H. W. Hunter**

*Reader: Mrs K. McElroy (Vice Principal, New Row Primary School)*

This Christmas,  
Mend a quarrel  
Seek out a forgotten friend,  
Share some treasure,  
Write a letter.  
Give a soft answer. Encourage youth,  
Manifest your loyalty in word and deed.  
Keep a promise. Forgive an enemy.  
Think first of someone else. Be kind. Be gentle.  
Laugh a little more.  
Express your gratitude.  
Welcome a stranger.  
Gladden the heart of a child.  
Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth.  
Speak your love, speak it again,  
speak it still, once again."

## Night of Silence / Silent Night

D. Kantor

*Senior Choir*

*Junior Choir*

*Primary Schools*

*Orchestra*

Cold are the people, winter of life  
We tremble in shadows this cold endless night  
Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping  
Flowers that will echo the sunrise  
Fire of hope is our only warmth  
Weary its flame will be dying soon.

Senior Choir

Spirit among us shine like the star  
Your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar  
Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely,  
Rising in the warmth of your Son's love  
Star unknowing of night and day  
Spirit we wait for your loving Son.

Senior and Junior Choir

Silent night holy night all is calm all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child  
Holy infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Parish Choir

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at first sight!  
Glories stream from heaven afar;  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ the Saviour is born!  
Christ the Saviour is born!

All choirs and congregation

## Our prayers for Christmas

*Reader: PJ Bradley (Anahorish Primary School)*

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, we pray for all those who continue to face the same struggles, injustices and poverty as they did this time last year. Their Christmas day will be a day like any other.

Lord hear us.

**R: Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Reader: Emma Bradley (Holy Family Primary School)*

This evening we pray with thanks for all the blessings and happiness we have. May God continue to bless our families, our friends and our school.

Lord hear us.

**R: Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Reader: Michael Heron (Year 13)*

Guimís ar son achan duine sa phobal a oibríonn go dian chun muid a choinneáil slán i rith aimsir na Nollag. Iarraimid ar Dhia iad uilig a oibríonn leis an chorás sláinte agus seirbhísi éigeandála a bheannú.

A Thiarna, éist linn.

**R: A Thiarna, bí ceansa agus eist linn.**

*Reader: Eimhear Dillon (Derrychrin Primary School)*

We pray for all the deceased members of our community, we remember especially all those who have left us since last Christmas. We place our loved ones in God's care.

Lord hear us.

**R: Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Reader: Anna McCloy (New Row Primary School)*

The three kings travelled hundreds of miles. We pray for all those who will be celebrating Christmas away from their families. We pray especially for refugees and those who are alone during the festive season, may they feel God's presence and know they are not alone.

Lord hear us.

**R: Lord, graciously hear us.**

**Carol: Mary's Boy Child**

**J. Hairston**

*Parish Schools*

## The fourth reading is from the Gospel according to Luke (2:15-20)

Reader: Emma McErlain (Anahorish Primary School)

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

## Carol: Away in a Manger

B.Chilcott

Junior Choir

### A Christmas of Contrasts

Readers: Ava Gilligan (Derrychrin Primary School), Anthony Boyle (New Row Primary School) and Niamh McGuckin (Holy Family Primary School)

I receive cards and letters from dear ones.

... There are many who have no one to love them.

I sit down to a Christmas dinner, a table of abundance.

...There are those who long for just a small portion of food and find none.

I feel love and goodness from those around me.

...There are people terrorized by death squads and tortured in prisons.

I open my many gifts, most of which are not needed.

...There are those who have no gifts to give or receive.

I move freely from home to home choosing whom I see and visit.

...There are persons who are mocked, ridiculed, disdained, or ignored because of their race and religion.

I return to the security of my home.

...There are countless homeless who have no dwelling place to which they can return.

*This Christmas...*

*Will I recognise God's presence in my world? Will I look beyond my own comfortable, cosy space and find God dwelling among the many who are lost, lonely, ill, neglected, forgotten? Will their presence in the world make any difference in how I celebrate the Holy One's coming to dwell in my midst? Will I see the love of God shining through the windowed hearts of Earth's people? Will I hear the truth long ago of this Beloved's kindness toward all? Will I hold these people in my heart this Christmas? Will I let them touch my prayer and my celebration?*

**Carol: Mary did you know?**

Mark Lowry

*Year 14 Choir*

**The fifth reading is from the Gospel according to Matthew (2:1-12)**

*Reader: Shane Maguire (Year 10)*

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Reader:                   The word of the Lord.

**All:**                       **Thanks be to God.**

**Carol: In the Bleak Mid-Winter**

**G. Holst**

*Soloist: Emma Dace (Year 13)*

*Wind Ensemble*

*Senior Choir*

*Junior Choir*

Verse One

*Solo Trumpet*

In the bleak mid-winter  
Frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
Snow on snow  
In the bleak mid-winter  
Long Ago.

*Wind Ensemble & Choirs*

What can I give Him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb,  
If I were a wise man,  
I would do my part,  
Yet what I can I give,  
Give my heart.

*Wind Ensemble, Choirs & Congregation*

**Carol: O Holy Night**

**A.Adam**

*Soloist: Daniel McNamee*

*Senior Choir*

**The Journey of the Magi**

**T.S. Eliot**

*Readers: Emily Dougan (Year 9)*

*Orin Devlin (Year 9)*

*Catherine McNamee (Year 10)*

**The sixth reading is from the Gospel according to Matthew (2: 13-15; 19-23)**

*Reader: Ava Mc Vey (Derrychrin Primary School)*

After the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

Reader:           The word of the Lord.

All:               **Thanks be to God.**

## Letter from Egypt

M. Andrew

*Reader: Miss M. Cumiskey (St. Mary's Grammar School)*

Dear Miriam,

Just a line to let you know how things  
are with us & of course to  
thank you (& your good man)  
for all you did for us - &  
at your busiest time too  
what with the census &  
everything. I was quite  
exhausted and the baby was  
beginning to make himself  
felt. If it hadn't been  
for all your help that night  
my baby might have died.

Good of you to put up with all our  
visitors - who'd have  
thought, six scruffy shepherds up  
& leaving their sheep like that?  
& didn't they ever smell?  
Still they were good-  
hearted & they meant well.  
I hope they brought some  
extra trade to the inn.  
They looked in need of  
a hot drink & a meal.

What about those kings too Miriam?  
Kneeling there in their rich robes  
& all? & me in nothing but  
my old blue dress! Joseph  
said not to worry, it was  
Jesus they'd come to see.  
Real gentlemen they were.  
But what funny things to  
give a baby - gold & myrrh  
& frankincense. That's men  
all over! It wouldn't cross  
their minds to bring a shawl!

Sorry we left so suddenly.  
No time for good-byes with king  
Herod on the warpath!  
We had to take the long way home  
& I'm so tired of looking at sand!  
Joseph has picked up a few  
jobs mending this & that so  
we're managing quite well.  
Jesus grows bonnier every day &  
thrives on this way of life, but I can't  
wait to see Nazareth again.

Love to all  
at the inn, Mary

**Concluding Comments:** Ms D. Gillespie (Principal, St. Mary's Grammar School)

**Concluding Prayer:** Fr. Gates

**Blessing:** Fr. Gates

**Carol: Hark! the herald-angels sing!**

F. Mendelssohn

Senior Choir

Junior Choir

Parish Schools

Congregation

Hark! The herald-angels sing  
Glory to the new born King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled  
Joyful all ye nations rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies  
With th' angelic host proclaim  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

*Hark! The Herald angels sing  
Glory to the new born King.*

Christ by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come  
Off-spring of a virgin's womb:  
Veiled in flesh the God-head see,  
Hail th' incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel

*Hark! The Herald angels sing  
Glory to the new born King.*

Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
Ris'n with healing in his wings;  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
Born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth

*Hark! The Herald angels sing  
Glory to the new born King.*

**Carol: Mary Rock**

**Anon.**

*Junior Choir*

### **Christmas Reflection**

Loving God, during this holy season of Christmas we ask for your blessing on all our families.

Let Mary's openness to your wondrous ways be an inspiration to place all trust in you.

Let Joseph's courage provide hope during times of anxiety and uncertainty.

Let Jesus' life ignite all families with a spirit of light and love.

May the grace that encircled the Holy Family widen to embrace all families.

Amen.

From the staff and students of St. Mary's Grammar School, we would like to thank you for joining us in our Carol Service this afternoon. We would like to extend a special thanks to the Primary Schools- New Row, Derrychrin, Anahorish and Holy Family for their contributions to this afternoons service and their continued support of St. Mary's.

We wish you and your families a holy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Please join us in the Parish Hall for some light refreshments and festive Carols.

## St. Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt.

