

Texts and Translations

Hodie christus natus est

*Hodie Christus natus est.
Hodie salvator apparuit.
Hodie in terra canunt angeli,
letantur archangeli.
Hodie exultant justi, dicentes
gloria in excelsis deo.
Alleluya.*

Today Christ is born;
today the savior has appeared;
today the angels sing on earth,
the archangels rejoice;
today good people exult, saying,
"Glory to God in the highest."
Alleluia!

A nywe werke

Alleluya, alleluya, alleluya.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*A nywe werk is come on honde
þorw myzt & grace of Godys sonde
to save þe lost of euery londe,
alleluya, alleluya
for now is fre þat erst was bonde,
we mowe wel synge alleluya.*

A new work has come on hand,
through the might and grace of God's
messenger,
to save the lost of every land.
alleluia, alleluia
For he is now free who was once in bondage;
we may well sing alleluia!

*By Gabriel by-gunne hit was
ryzt as the sunne shone thorwe the glas.
Ihesu Cryst conceyued was
alleluya, alleluya
of Mary moder ful of grace.
Nowe synge we here alleluya.*

By Gabriel it was begun;
just as the sun shone through the glass,
Jesus Christ was conceived
alleluia, alleluia
of Mary, mother, full of grace.
Now let us sing alleluia!

Ther is no rose of swych vertu

*Ther is no rose of swych vertu
as is the rose that bar Ihesu.*

There is no rose of such virtue
as is the rose that bore Jesus.

*Ther is no rose of swych vertu
as is the rose that bar Ihesu, alleluya.*

There is no rose of such virtue
as is the rose that bore Jesus, alleluia.

*For in this rose conteyned was
heuen and erthe in lytyl space,
res miranda.*

For in this rose was contained
both heaven and earth in a little space,
a thing to wonder at.

*Be that rose we may weel see
that he is God in personys thre,
pari forma.*

By that rose we may well see
that he is God in persons three,
but of equal form.

*The aungelys sungyn the sheperdes to,
'Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gaudeamus.*

The angels sang to the shepherds,
"Glory in the highest to God." Let us rejoice!

*Leue we al this worldly merthe,
and folwe we this ioyful berth.
Transeamus.*

Let us leave this worldly mirth
and follow this joyful birth.
Let us go.

Nowel: Owt of your slepe aryse

*Nowel, nowel, nowel,
nowel, nowel, nowel.*

*Owt of your slepe aryse & wake
for God mankynd nowe hath ytake
al of a maide without eny make,
of al women she bereth the belle.
Nowel.*

*And þorwe a maide fare & wyse
now man is made of ful grete pris.
Now angelys knelen to mannys seruys
& at þis tyme al þis byfel.
Nowel.*

*Now man is brizter þan þe sonne,
Now man in heuen an hye shal wonne.
Blessed be God þis game is begonne
& his moder emperesse of helle.
Nowel.*

Solstice Carole

A fire is burning
The long night draws near
All who need comfort
Are welcome by here

We'll dance 'neath the stars
And toast the past year
For the spirit of solstice
Is still living here

We'll count all our blessings
While the Mother lays down
With snow as her blanket
Covering the ground

Adam Lay Ybounden

Adam lay ybounden
Bounden in a bond;
Four thousand winter,
Thought he not too long.
And all was for an apple
An apple that he took.
As clerkes finden,
Written in their book.
Ne had the apple taken been

Nowell, nowell, nowell,
nowell, nowell, nowell.

Out of your sleep arise and awaken,
for God has taken human form
from a maid without any equal:
of all women she is best.
Nowell!

And through a fair and wise maiden
humankind is now brought to its full worth;
now the angels kneel in the service of humanity
and at Christmas time, all this took place.
Nowell!

Now man is brighter than the sun;
Man shall now dwell on high;
Blessed be God that this game is begun,
And his mother the empress of hell.
Nowell!

Thanks to the Mother
For the life that she brings
She'll waken to warm us
Again in the spring

The poor and the hungry
The sick and the lost
These are our children
No matter the cost

Come by the fire
The harvest to share
For the spirit of solstice
Is still living here

The apple taken been,
Ne had never our ladie,
abeen heav'ne queen.
Blessed be the time
That apple taken was,
Therefore we moun singen.
Deo gracias!

— anonymous 15th century

O Frondens Virga

*O frondens virga,
in tua nobilitate stans
sicut aurora procedit:
nunc gaude et letare
et nos debiles dignare
a mala consuetudine liberare
atque manum tuam porrige ad erigendum nos.*
— Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1179)

O verdant branch,
standing in your nobility
as dawn advances:
now rejoice and be glad,
and deem us, helpless ones, worthy
of freeing us from evil habits
and even stretch forth your hand to lift us up.

There Is No Rose

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

By that rose we may well see
There be one God in persons three.
Pares forma.

For in this rose contained was
Heaven and earth in little space.
Resmiranda.

Then leave we all this worldly mirth,
And follow we this joyous birth.
Transeamus.
— Anonymous medieval text

Maoz Tzur

Ma'oz Tzur Yeshu'ati, lekha na'eh leshabe'ach.
Tikon beit tefilati, vesham toda nezabe'ach.
Le'et takhin matbe'ah mitzar hammabe'ach.
Az egmor beshir mizmor chanukat
hamizbe'ach.
— Anonymous 13th century

My Refuge, my Rock of Salvation! 'Tis pleasant to sing Your praises. Let our house of prayer be restored. And there we will offer You our thanks. When You will have slaughtered the barking foe. Then we will celebrate with song and psalm the altar's dedication.

Lead Gently, Lord

Lead gently, Lord, and slow,
For oh, my steps are weak,
And ever as I go,
Some soothing sentence speak;

Lead gently, Lord, and slow,
For fear that I may fall;
I know not where to go
Unless I hear thy call.

That I may turn my face
Through doubt's obscurity
Toward thine abiding-place,
E'en tho' I cannot see.

My fainting soul doth yearn
For thy green hills afar;
So let thy mercy burn –
My greater, guiding star!

For lo, the way is dark;
Through mist and cloud I grope,
Save for that fitful spark,
The little flame of hope.

— Paul Lawrence Dunbar (1872-1906)

This Little Light of Mine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
All through the night, I'm gonna let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
My God gave it to me, I'm gonna let it shine, children. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

The Legends of Saint Nicholas

Intonent Hodie

*Intonent hodie voces ecclesie
Dies letitie
refulsit in mundo ergo letabundo
corde jubilemo et ore jucundo.*

*Sanctus hic inclitus domino subditus
in cunis positus;
ubera vitabat, corpus macerabat
et ter in sabbato puer jejunabat.*

*Parenti misero submerso puero
mari pestifero
dedit quod petivit, preces exaudivit,
submersum puerum patris custodivit.*

*Tribus virginibus victu carentibus
[auri egentibus]
reddidit honorem, subtraxit errorem
reddens virginibus virgineum florem.*

Exultemus et letemur

*Exultemus et letemur, nicholaum veneremur,
eius laudes decantemus et suef aleiz,
decantando perdicemus et si m'entendeiz.*

*Quidquid adest homo gaude, presul adest dignus laude.
Omnis ordo gratulare et suef aleiz,
novum dignum exultare et si m'entendeiz.*

*Vates tuus sit hic clamor nicholae noster amor,
hec et noster qui sit rector et suef aleiz,
jube domne dicat lector et si m'entendeiz.*

Gaudens in domino

*Gaudens in domino in hoc sollempnio
letetur omnium turba fidelium,*

*hymnis et organis ad laudem presulis,
cuius miracula canit ecclesia.*

*Qui ab infantia divina gratia
servivit domino devoto animo.*

*Et tu progredere o lector incipe
in primo carmine dic iube domine.*

Let the voices of the church sing out today.
Thus this joyful day
shone forth in a rejoicing world
with a jubilant heart and a merry mouth.

This famous saint, the lord's subject,
was placed in a cradle;
he avoided the breast, denied his flesh,
and thrice on Saturday the little boy fasted.

To the wretched parent, his boy drowned
in the dangerous sea,
he granted what was asked; he heard his
prayers,
and gave the drowned boy back to his father.

To the three virgins lacking food and needing
money, he restored honor, saving them from
error, giving back to the maidens the flower of
virginity.

Let us be glad and rejoice, let us honor Nicholas,
let us sing his praises and go softly,
let us praise him with singing and so hear me.

Everything here, rejoice: here is the praiseworthy
patron. Every rank renders thanks and go softly,
to exalt the new worthy one and so hear me.

Master, may this your paean be our love of
Nicholas; may he be our guide and go softly,
let the reader say: "command, o lord" and so hear
me.

Praising the lord on this holy day,
let the throng of all the faithful rejoice

with hymns and organs, in praise of the bishop
whose miracles the church sings;

who from his infancy, by divine grace,
served the lord with a devoted heart.

And thus, o reader, step forward and begin, and
with your first notes, say: "Command, o lord."

Nicholai presulis

*Nicholai presulis festum celebremus
concrepando moduli letitie sonemus.
Versibus almisonis diem decoremus
vocibus altisonis intenti festinemus.*

*In tanto natalitio patrum docet traditio
ut consonet in gaudio fidelium devotio,
est ergo superstitio vacare a tripudio.*

*Nunc igitur iustorum suavitas cantorum
per tymphanum et chorum et omne musicorum
genus instrumentorum psallat deo decorum.*

Santa Claus is Coming to Town

Oh, you better watch out, you better not cry.
You better not pout, I'm tellin' you why:
Santa Claus is comin' to town.

Oh, he's makin' a list, and checkin' it twice.
Gonna find out who's naughty and nice.
Santa Claus is comin to town.

He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake.
He knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake.

Oh, you better watch out, you better not cry.
You better not pout, I'm tellin' you why:
Santa Claus is comin' to town.

Let us celebrate the feast of bishop Nicholas,
singing happy melodies together.
With sweet songs we'll ornament this day,
letting our voices soar high and quick.

On such a natal feast, our ancestors' tradition
teaches that the devotion of the faithful should
harmonize in joy, so let fear give way to dancing.

Now, therefore let the sweet songs of the just —
with drums and chorus and every kind
of musical instruments — sing to the God of gods.

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