

## New words to old hymns

Mary Ann McGivern | Dec. 26, 2012 NCR Today

Loretto Sr. Ann Pat Ware has spent some of her spare time writing new words to old hymns. Here for your reflection and pleasure are Christmas carols that give context to our celebration. Feel free to copy and distribute, giving credit to Ann Pat.

### JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world for Christmas comes

With songs of hope and mirth.

While fields and floods,

Rocks, hills, and plains

And all the sites of earth

Recall to us Christ's birth

And teach us and preach to us

Our wondrous worth.

Joy to the world, it's Mary's night ?

Deliverance is near.

She smiles to see that little face,

The gift of God and her own grace,

The child whom God holds dear,

Who comes to cast out fear.

We greet them, entreat them

To bless us here.

Joy to us all who strive to be  
A sister and a friend;  
We want to act with honesty  
Good humor and integrity.  
Our energies we'll spend  
{Trying never to offend}  
In aiding, persuading  
All hate to end.

### **O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL**

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.  
Come and adore the one who comes as brother.  
O come let us adore and give praise to our Creator!  
O come let us adore God this Christmas day.

Sing, all ye cantors, sing a joyous carol,  
Sing, ring the bells, and bring your gifts to the Child.  
Honor young Mary, honor stalwart Joseph.  
O come let us adore and give praise to our Creator.  
O come let us adore God this Christmas Day.

### **THE FIRST NOWELL**

The first Nowell was sung to the poor,

To the shepherds who watched on the cold, misty moor;  
And the brightness of a star which they'd not seen before  
Unexpectedly lightened their sheep-watching chore.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell. Nowell,  
Stars are a sign that you never can tell.

No, you never can be sure what the future does hold,  
For when life seems awry and the prospects are cold  
In the twinkling of an eye our God can decree  
A wonderful new possibility.  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
Here's to a Christmas when all will be well!

Now we who celebrate God's love for this earth  
Stand in wonder before our dear Christ-child's birth.  
But we hanker after days when we saw with delight  
The crib and the ox and the heavenly light.  
Nowell, Nowell, this Christmas feast,  
Where are the Magi who came from the East?

## **SILENT NIGHT**

Silent night, holy night,  
God keep all whose hearts are right.  
Wisdom lies in a manger bed,  
Shepherds dazed by a star are led;

Christ our brother is born,

Christ our brother is born.

Silent night, holy night,

Bless us all here tonight

As we try to recapture the truth

Once so certain to us in youth.

Give us new eyes that we

May fathom this mystery.

### **HERE WE COME A-WASSAILING**

Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green,

Here we come a-wand?ring so fair to be seen:

Love and joy come to you,

And to you your wassail too,

And God bless you and send you

A happy New Year?

And God send you a happy New Year.

We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door?

We are your jolly neighbors whom you have seen before.

(Love and joy?)

### **HARK, LIKE HERALD ANGELS**

Hark, like herald angels, we  
Greet this year's Nativity.  
Sing we now of love and mirth  
Coming to our weary earth.  
With each year we must renew  
Strength and energy to do  
Acts of courage, acts of peace,  
Make the store of love increase;  
Yes, with courage and with peace,  
Make the store of love increase.

Modern angels do not prize  
Garb that we can recognize?  
Gone is halo, harp and gown,  
But still angels grace our town.  
You may find one here on Broadway  
Dressed in ragged and slipshod way.  
Hark, to herald angels bring  
Deep respect and wondering.  
Treat each angel with great care  
For the Child may linger there.

Hark, the herald angels sing:  
"Peace on earth," their voices ring.  
"Lion and lamb at peace," we read,  
"And a little child shall lead."

Wave a crane as sign of life.  
Down with conflict, arms and strive!  
Make your heart and body be  
Ocean of tranquility.  
Songs of angels we will heed,  
And a little child shall lead.

### **CHRISTMAS WELCOME**

(Tune of "Good King Wenceslaus")

Give us holly, give us greens,  
Give us elderberry.  
We will make our tired wreath  
Bright again and merry.  
Sing with joy, it's time to do  
Deeds of love and mercy.  
Here's a moment to renew  
Christmas possibility.

"Mid the carols and the noise  
Of each year's December;  
"Mid the hoopla and the toys,  
Everyone, remember:  
Once there was a lonely pair  
Traveling in the night gloom.  
And they heard in their despair?

?Go away! We have NO ROOM!?

We have room, so let us choose

Lovingly to share it,

Helping those weighted down with care

Gallantly to bear it:

Room for pain, for hope, for glee,

Room for one another,

Room for hospitality ?

Gift of Christ, our Brother.

With our holly and our greens

And our elderberry,

We have made our dreary wreath

Bright again and merry.

Sing with joy, it's time to be

Fanciful and witty?

Here's a season to renew

Christmas possibility.

## **O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM**

O little town of Bethlehem,

The crèche beneath our tree

Makes you seem real,

And there we kneel

In flights of fantasy.

All caught up in the shepherds,

The angels and the star,

We fail to see

Reality ?

The dreadful cost of war.

O little town, like every town,

Your streets are filled with life.

While children play

Their mothers pray

For end to hate and strife.

Where is the Christmas angel

With promises of peace?

What task is ours

To heal the scars,

To make this bloodshed cease?

O little town, I wish that I

Could view you like a child:

Could only see

Romantically

The Babe and ?Virgin mild.?

For then I'd find my pleasure

In jingling bells and sleigh.

No need to ask,

To face the task:

Have we a role to play?

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