

Today, the Franz Xaver Gruber Museum and the Joseph Mohr School in Wagrain, Austria honour the creators of this classic carol. The Stille Nacht Gesellschaft (Silent Night Society) hosts a virtual Silent Night Museum, tracks events, and promotes the use of all six verses, which in the words of Silent Night Society president “(encourage) peace and (demand) responsibility for the globe”. The English version is typically sung in three verses corresponding with the original 1, 6, and 2. *Source: Susan Lewis, writer and producer (arts and culture)*

-Bernard Kellett

Entrance antiphon: After the Lord was baptized, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7

Psalm 28: Response: The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Second Reading: Acts 10: 34-38

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! The heavens opened and the Father’s voice resounded: ‘This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.’ Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew 3: 13-17

Memorial Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: Behold the One of whom John said: I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.

"Let us pray for peace: peace in the world and in each of our hearts." "God's love calls us to move beyond fear. We ask God for the courage to put on faith, hope and love as we go out into the world and become the word in body as well as spirit." Pope Francis



Baptism of the Lord

Cycle A, 2023 Weekly Reflection

Silent Night: Silent Night was first heard by Austrian villagers attending Christmas Eve mass in St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf. It has since become a beloved

hymn of peace throughout the world with its simple melody and words of comfort. “Silent night” is about a calm and bright night, and the wonder of a tender and mild new-born child, words written in 1816 by a young priest in Austria, Joseph Mohr, not long after the Napoleonic wars had taken their toll. “The back story is that the priest went for a walk before he wrote it, and he looked over a very quiet, winter-laden town “says composer/conductor John Conahan, “he was inspired ... the town was at peace.”

It was Christmas Eve 1818, when the now famous carol was first performed as Stille Nacht Heilige Nacht. Joseph Mohr who wrote the lyrics, played the guitar and sang along with Franz Xaver Gruber, the choir director who had written the melody. An organ builder and repair man working at the church took a copy of the six-verse song to his home village. There it was picked and spread by two families of travelling folk singers, who performed around northern Europe. In 1834, the Strasser family performed it for the King of Prussia. In 1839, the Rainer family of singers debuted the carol outside Trinity Church in New York City.

The composition evolved and was translated into over 300 languages with many different arrangements for various voices and ensembles. It was sung in churches, town squares, even on the battlefield during World War 1, when during a temporary truce on Christmas Eve, soldiers sang carols from home. “Silent Night” by 1914, known around the world, was sung simultaneously in French, German, and English. Over the years, the carol’s mystique grew with its popularity. After the original manuscript was lost, for decades, some speculated that the music had been written by Hyden, Mozart or Beethoven. In 1994 an original manuscript was found in Mohr’s handwriting with Gruber named as the composer.