

Texts and Translations

Hildegard of Bingen (c.1098-1179) O virtus sapientiae

O virtus Sapientiae,
quae circuiens circuisti
comprehendendo omnia
in una via, quae habet vitam,
tres alas habens,
quarum una in altum volat,
et altera de terra sudat,
et tertia undique volat.
Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet,
O Sapientia.

*O strength of Wisdom
who, circling, circled,
enclosing all
in one lifegiving path,
three wings you have:
one soars to the heights,
one distils its essence upon the earth,
and the third is everywhere.
Praise to you, as is fitting,
O Wisdom.*

Duarte Lôbo (c. 1565-1646) Hodie nobis caelorum rex

Hodie nobis, caelorum Rex de Virgine
nasci dignatus est,
Ut hominem perditum ad caelestia regna
revocaret.

*Today for us the king of heaven is born,
worthy to be born of a virgin,
so he might restore ruined man to the
heavenly kingdom.*

Gaudet exercitus, Angelorum:
quia salus aeterna humano generi
apparuit.

*The host of angels rejoices:
because eternal salvation has appeared for
the human race.*

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

*Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace and good will to men:*

Gloria Patri, et Filio,
Et Spiritui Sancto

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit*

John Goss (c.1800 - 1880) See amid the winter's snow

See amid the winter's snow,
Born for us on earth below;
See the tender Lamb appears,
Promised from eternal years:

Hail, thou ever blessed morn;
Hail, redemption's happy dawn;
Sing through all Jerusalem,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the starry skies;
He who, throned in height sublime,
Sits amid the cherubim:

Hail, thou ever blessed morn: etc.

Say, ye holy shepherds, say
What your joyful news to-day;
Wherefore have ye left your sheep
On the lonely mountain steep?

Hail, thou ever blessed morn: etc.

'As we watched a dead of night,
Lo, we saw a wondrous light;
Angels singing, "Peace on earth"
Told us of the Saviour's birth':

Hail, thou ever blessed morn: etc.

Sacred infant, all divine,
What a tender love was thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss
Down to such a world as this:

Hail, thou ever blessed morn: etc.

Teach, O teach us, holy Child,
By thy face so meek and mild,
Teach us to resemble thee,
In thy sweet humility:

Hail, thou ever blessed morn: etc.

John Joubert (c. 1927-2019) There is no rose

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

For in this rose containèd was
Heav'n and earth in little space;
Resmiranda.

By that rose we may well see
There be one God in Persons Three:
Pares forma.

Then leave we all this worldly mirth
And follow we this joyous birth:
Transeamus.

Traditional (arr. Rontgen) Dutch Carol (A child is born in Bethlehem)

A child is born in Bethlehem:
Awaiteth him all Jerusalem.
Amor! Quam dulcis est amor!

The Son took upon him humanity,
That to the Father thus draws nigh:
Amor! Quam dulcis est amor!

The angels above were singing then,
Below were rejoicing the shepherd men:
Amor! Quam dulcis est amor!

Now let us all with the angels sing,
Yea, now let our hearts for gladness spring:
Amor! Quam dulcis est amor!

Hywel Davies A boy is born in Bethlehem

A boy is born in Bethlehem,
And joy is in Jerusalem, Alleluia.
And there he lay in manger poor,
Whose reign shall last for evermore, Alleluia.

The ass and ox and all the herd,
Know well that Boy to be the Lord, Alleluia.
And three kings came from out the East,
With gold and frankincense and myrrh, Alleluia.

He came our souls to purify,
And bring us safe to bliss on high, Alleluia.
Therefore let us with once accord,
On this his birthday praise the Lord! Alleluia.

Medieval Carol Saint Thomas honour we

Saint Thomas honour we,
thro whose blood Holy Church is made free.

All Holy Church was but a thrall,
Thro king and temporal lordës all,
To he was slain in Christës hall
And set all thing in unity;
His death hath such aucturity.

Saint Thomas honour we,
thro whose blood Holy Church is made free.

The king exiled him out of land,
And took his good in his hand,
Forbidding both free and bond
that no prayer for him should be;
so fierce he shewed his cruelty.

Saint Thomas honour we,
thro whose blood Holy Church is made free.

The king but little while him spared;
Knightës in church his crown off pared.
Thus the cornerstone was squared
Between clergy and temp'ralty
To knit peace and unity.

Saint Thomas honour we,
thro whose blood Holy Church is made free.

Duarte Lôbo

Verbum caro factum est

Verbum caro factum est,
Et habitavit in nobis:
Et vidimus gloriam eius,
gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre,
plenum gratiae et veritatis.

Omnia per ipsum facta sunt,
Et sine ipso factum est nihil.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui sancto.

*The Word was made flesh
and dwelt among us,
And we beheld his glory as of
the only Son of the Father,
Full of grace and truth.*

*In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,
And the Word was God.*

*Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.*

Traditional (arr. by David Willcocks)

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

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, oh, my love,
my love, my love;
This have I done for my true love.

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:

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

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

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

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, oh, my love,
my love, my love;
This have I done for my true love

Morten Lauridsen (b.1943) O magnum mysterium

O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,

O magnum mysterium,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
jacentem in praesepio!

Beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Christum.
Alleluia!

INTERVAL

O great mystery and wondrous sacrament,

*O great mystery,
That animals should see the
Lord at his birth, lying in their manger!*

*Blessed is the Maiden whose womb
earned the distinction of bearing Christ
the Lord.*

Alleluia!

Hildegard of Bingen O quam magnum miraculum

O quam magnum miraculum est
quod in subditam femineam
formam rex introivit.
Hoc Deus fecit quia humilitas
super omnia ascendit.
Et o quam magna felicitas
est in ista forma,
quia malicia,
que de femina fluxit hanc
femina postea detersit
et omnem suavissimum
odorem virtutum edificavit
ac celum ornavit
plus quam terram prius turbavit.

*Oh what a great miracle
that the king entered
into the humble body of a woman.
God did this because lowliness
rises above everything.
And O! what incredible blessing
there is in that body
since the ill
that flowed from a woman [Eve]
a woman [Mary] later wiped clean
and raised up the sweetest
scent of all the virtues
and adorned heaven, even
more than she [Eve] had
cast the Earth into disorder*

Duarte Lôbo

O magnum mysterium

O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
iacentem in praesepio:

Beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt
portare Dominum Christum.

Ave, María, gratis plena:
Dominus te cum.

*O great mystery and wondrous sacrament,
That animals should see the Lord at his birth,
Lying in their manger!*

*Blessed is the Maiden whose womb earned the
Distinction of bearing Christ the Lord.*

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

Medieval Carol Letare, Cantuarua

Laetare, Cantuarua, de sancti Thome victoria. Rejoice, Canterbury, in the victory of St Thomas.
Gens Anglorum gaudeat in laudem pii martiris, Let the English race rejoice in praise of the
Cum dies jam effulgeat beati Thome presulis. blessed martyr,
Dum vixit, vita floruit virtutum exercicio; since the day now shines forth of the blessed
Justiciam exhibuit cuncto poscenti populo. priest Thomas.
Deum constanter coluit, super gregem While he lived, life flourished in the exercise
evigilans; of virtue,
Ostendit sicut decuit quod erat Christo he showed justice to all his beseeching people.
famulans. Constantly he honoured God, watching over
his flock;
he demonstrated as was fitting that he was a
servant of Christ.

Margaret Rizza (b.1929) O Sapientia

O sapientia, quae ex ore altissimi prodiisti.
Attingens a fine usque ad finem.
fortiter suaviterque disponens omnia.
O sapientia, veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.
*O Wisdom, which camest out of the mouth of the Most High,
reaching from end to end
and ordering all things mightily and sweetly:
O Wisdom, come and teach us the way of prudence.*

And so I prayed and understanding was given me;
I entreated and the spirit of wisdom came to me.
I esteemed her more than sceptres or thrones.
Compared with her, I held riches as nothing,
I reckoned no priceless stone to be her peer.
For compared with her, gold is a grain of sand and beside her, silver ranks as mud.
I loved her more than health or beauty,
Preferred her to the light, since her radiance never sleeps.
In her company all good things came to me;
At her hands riches not to be numbered,
For she is an inexhaustible treasure to people and those who acquire it win God's
friendship,
Commended as they are to him by the benefits of her teaching.

O sapientia, veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.
O Wisdom, come and teach us the way of prudence.

Bryan Kelly (b.1934) 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
Heav'n and earth in little space;
Resmiranda.
The angels sung the shephards to;
Gloria in excelsis Deo: Guadeamus.
Leave we all this worldly mirth,
And follow this joyful birth,
Transeamus.

Samuel Scheidt (c. 1587-1654) Puer natus in Bethlehem

Puer natus in Bethlehem, Alleluia. *A boy is born in Bethlehem,
Unde gaudet Jerusalem. Alleluia. whereof Jerusalem may rejoice.
Hic jacet in praesepio, Alleluia. Here lies in a manger
Qui regnat sine termino. Alleluia. he who reigns without end.
Reges de Saba veniunt, Alleluia. Kings come from Saba,
Aurum, thus, myrrham offerunt. Alleluia. they offer gold, incense and myrrh.
Intrantes domum invicem, Alleluia. They enter the house in their turn,
Novum salutant principem. Alleluia. to hail the new-born prince.
In hoc natali gaudio, Alleluia. In this joyful birth
Benedicamus Domino: Alleluia. let us bless the Lord. Alleluia.*

William Byrd (c. 1543-1623) This day Christ was born

This day Christ was borne,
This day our Saviour did appear,
This day the Angels sing in earth,
The Archangels are glad.
This day the just rejoice, saying:
Glory be to God on high.
Alleluia.

Traditional (adapted by Arthur Sullivan)

It came upon the midnight clear

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
'Peace on the earth, goodwill to men,
From heaven's all-gracious king!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heav'nly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hov'ring wing;
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing

Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing!

For lo! The days are hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When, with the ever-circling years,
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

John Sheppard (c. 1515-1558)

Verbum caro factum est

Verbum caro factum est
Et habitavit in nobis:
cuius gloriam vidimus
quasi unigeniti, a Patre,
plenum gratiae et veritatis.

*The Word was made flesh and dwelt
among us,
and we beheld his glory as of the only Son
of the Father,
full of grace and truth.
In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,
And the Word was God.
Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.*

Gareth Tresseder (b.1985) Tomorrow shall be my dancing day

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, oh, my love, my love, my love;
This have I done for my true love.
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.

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

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.

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

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

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