IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

"A Pennsylvania Charitable Trust"

December 25, 2022

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

A Parish of the Diocese of Greensburg



SACRAMENTS

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

The sacrament is available during Confession hour and after each Mass per request.

MATRIMONY

Couples wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony must contact a priest of the parish one year in advance of the wedding. Diocesan regulations require that couples begin to work with the parish at least one year prior to a wedding.

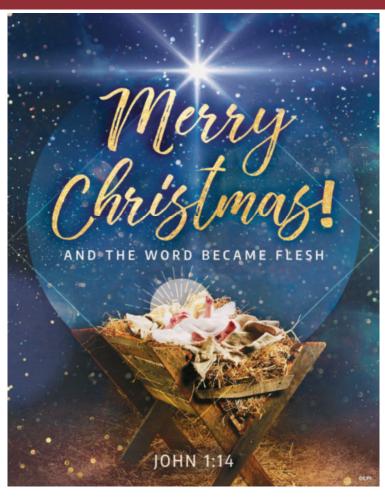
BAPTISM

Families of our parish who wish to have their child baptized should call the parish office to register for Baptism Prep. Please call well in advance of birth of your child.

CONFESSION

Anytime by appointment

Tuesday: 5:15 - 6:15 p.m.; Saturdays: 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.



MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday, December 24

8:00 a.m Liddie Blank (Office Staff) 4:00 p.m. Pat, John, Don Huemme (Family)

6:00 p.m. Michael Scott Borland (Mom)

8:00 p.m. Michele Ruby

(Ed & Paulette)

Midnight Jud Shiffler (Mom & Dad)

Sunday, December 25

9:30 a.m. Our Parish Family

Monday, December 26

7:45 a.m. Joseph Fontana, Jr (Kathy & Al)

Tuesday, December 27

7:45 a.m. William Takacs (Friends) 6:30 p.m. Michael Scott Borland (Dorothy)

Wednesday, December 28

7:45 a.m. John Churma (Wife & Family)

Thursday, December 29

7:45 a.m. Jud Shiffler (Mom & Dad) Friday, December 30

7:45 a.m. Ida & Herman Richardson (Family)

Saturday, December 31

8:00 a.m. Our Parish Family

4:30 p.m. Bob Sistek (Daughter Cindy)

Sunday, January 1

8:00 a.m. Betty & Bernard Sanger

(Family)

10:00 a.m. Anthony DePaulo

(Lisa & Family)

11:30 a.m. James R. Balfe (Nancy)

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308 SECOND STREET • IRWIN, PA 15642 • PARISH OFFICE HOURS: 8:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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Operation Safe Mode (OSM)

Sunday 8:00 am Mass www.YouTube.com/operationsafemode

Queen of Angels Catholic School

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Diocese of Greensburg

www.dioceseofgreensburg.org

Catholic Charities 724-837-1840

St. Vincent DePaul www.svdpgreensburg.org 724-691-3711

IC's On The Corner Event Planner



The staff at IC, wish everyone a Blessed and Merry Christmas!



This Week on the Corner

REMINDER! Mass for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day will be at the regular weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:30 pm Sunday 8:00 am; 10:00 am; and 11:30 am



The Parish Office is Closed during the Christmas Holiday - Thursday December 22nd at Noon - Monday December 26th. The Office Will be Open at Noon on Tuesday December 27th through December 30th.



Attention All Volunteers:

If you are interested in volunteering or planning to resume volunteering for our parish ministries and parish activities please contact Sharyn Gesmond at sgesmond@dioceseofgreensburg.or or 724-863-9550.

FAITH FORMATION -

Grades 1-2 - Faith Formation for Public School Students, Saturday January 7th, 9:00 am - 10:30 am 2nd Floor of the Administration Building

Grades 3-6 – Faith Formation for Public School Students, Monday, January 9th, 6:00 – 7:30 pm, 2nd Floor of the Administration Building

7th **Grade Faith Formation**— Class will be Monday January 16th from 6:00-7:15pm in Our Lady's Plaza at Immaculate Conception.

8th **Grade Faith Formation**– Class will be Monday January 16th from 7:45 to 9pm in Our Lady's Plaza at Immaculate Conception.



Thank you to everyone who participated in the Santa Breakfast! We appreciate everyone who attended and the volunteers who made the event possible! It

was wonderful to see this event return to our community!





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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Christmas Message from Father Roniel - Christmas in the Philippines

Most of my friends here in America love Christmas more than any other holidays. "It's the most wonderful time of the year," as we all say. Speaking from the 4 Christmases I've had in Irwin and North Huntingdon, I could only agree. I love the packed church; the solemn and meaningful advent preparation, the Christmas carols rendered in original native tongue; the truly and literally snowy and cold December; the colorful and flickering series lights all over most houses, the exchange of beautiful holiday cards, and the excitement of finding out the tested and proven generous gifts from Kris Kringle. And what could be crazier than knowing I am not just watching *Home Alone*, I am now part of the hustle-and-bustle of Christmas in America in real time.

Filipinos too can be uniquely and equally crazy with Christmas. If you heard about "*Ber*-months"—the time of the year that fall on September to December—that's how long Filipinos would like to celebrate this joyful season. Christmas in the Philippines is also as lively, colorful, full of traditions, bright, and definitely twinkling as the ones I saw at Overly's Country Christmas.

The first days come with songs and carols; radio stations fill the air with the season's spirit; while TV programs kick-off the countdown. Kids go house-to-house, a la trick or treat, singing Christmas carols where some accompanied it with dancing and choreography. As days go by, fire cracker flares and blasts are seen and heard sporadically everywhere. Of course, this celebratory noise and excitement build in crescendo each day as it goes all-out Christmas Midnight as well as on the threshold of New Year's Day.

One of the most iconic symbols of Filipino Christmas spirit, is the Christmas lantern or locally known as "paról". The term is coined from Spanish "farola" which means lamp or light. What served as guide for the three wise men to finally find the Baby Jesus on the manger was the lamp from heaven—the guiding star of Bethlehem. So this explains why the paról or farola is in a star-shape.

I have one hanging by the window of my apartment with its bouncing and colorful lights illuminating that little part of route 993. In my home country these star-shaped lanterns are displayed hanging outside the house too, along the busy streets of the cities and even in provincial towns and small villages. I grew up making one of them since fourth grade to the tenth—not the fancy ones though. But, be it a paról with simple or intricate designs, for Filipinos, it is an expression of shared faith and hope, the symbol of the triumph of light over darkness, and of Filipinos' goodwill during Christmas season.

Filipinos too are widely known for celebrating the Simbang Gabi or Misa de Gallo. Historically, Simbang Gabi was adapted from the Catholic Misa de Gallo, which literally means "Mass of the rooster," to indicate it is held when the rooster crows. This event dates back to the time when Miguel Lopez de Legazpi celebrated the first feast of the Nativity in the year 1565 in the Philippine archipelago.

Simbang Gabi traces its roots in Mexico when, in 1587, Fray Diego de Soria, head of the convent of San Agustin Acolman, petitioned the Pope for permission to hold Christmastide Masses outdoors because the church could not accommodate the multitude that attended the dawn services. When the request was granted, the Masses became known as Misa de Aguinaldo.

It was in the 16th century when Pope Sixtus V decreed that these pre-dawn Masses also be held in the Philippines starting every Dec. 16. The decree was in keeping with the nine-day traditional festivals of Filipinos in celebrating auspicious occasions like harvest times. It was also meant to give farmers a chance to hear Mass before setting out for the fields. Rural Filipinos were used to starting the day two hours before sunrise. Church bells rang to call the faithful to Simbang Gabi. In some provinces, brass bands played traditional Christmas music and parish priests would go as far as knocking on the doors of every home. In my home parish, we wake up to the jolly Christmas jingles played on record and poems read by the pastor.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

During this season, although the paróls now are made to look more like decoratives but previously the lanterns' purpose was to light the street, to serve as the farmers' guide in going to the Holy Mass. After Mass, the parishioners treated themselves to traditional "Puto, Kutsinta and Bibingka," made with sweet rice dough to crown each of the nine-day novena and truly celebrate Christmas, the Filipino way.

One Christmas time, my fellow acolytes and I came up with a beautiful Christmas outreach program. I was still a seminarian then. We had a whole busy day of going one place to another to distribute Christmas gifts to the less fortunate families of our parish. It was already dusk when we had to bring the last gift to a house which was relatively far from where we were stationed. It was located in the middle of a rice field—we walked through the muddy, buggy, and dark trail which we actually could only care less though.

Inside that little shanty was a disabled old woman waiting for her son to arrive from a day's work. Her house was dimly lit--no electricity, old and worn, poor and solitary but probably a bit better than a stable. I felt her in her illness that crippled her for the rest of her life. But her voice was strong and filled with enthusiasm as she bid us welcome to her lowly abode. She was not expecting anything, but I know she was happy to see us young kids who, she probably thought, were accidently lost to her place.

We have gifts for you, we surprised her—"20 pounds of rice, several packs of noodles, and canned goods." Her joy was priceless and she couldn't be more grateful with the thought that she was unexpectedly visited by some young kids she later called angels. Then she greeted us back with a happier "Merry Christmas."

I cherished that evening as one of my most unforgettable and meaningful Christmases I had. There's joy in being able to bring a little more happiness and light—like a paról, to people whom God allows us to meet with. But that evening, it was I think, I, in turn had so much to learn what Christmas truly and deeply meant.

Christmas is a celebration everywhere. It brings the same joy to every home. In my eyes, the circumstance this poor woman was into maybe as dim as that scantily lit shack where she lived. Hope was as tiny as that little burning lamp on her table, but, it seems, even that was already enough to get her through each day with probably a little complaint but with more of gratitude. In fact, she was quite excited to see her son come home and meet with us, "he's bringing goodies too for our 'noche buena' (Christmas meal) tonight." she proudly reported.

What was just set before my eyes, was the face of poverty in its boldest. But the joy of Christmas remained pure and undiminished even as it was to be celebrated in that literally poor home. The light and hope that Christ brings is the greatest gift we receive on Christmas. And it touched me so deeply to know that the mother in that poor shanty kept that light ever burning in her heart. That's what it means "to keep Christ on Christmas". With a heart like this, we can say, Christmas indeed is that time of the year that the poor can celebrate with as much joy as the rich. For the Mighty Savior, the Emmanuel, whose light is far brighter than any darkness and despair is born for us!



CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

Father John Moineau



In this past Advent Season, we took on the challenge to Focus, Prepare and Practice what was necessary to put our backs to the noise of the world so we could properly prepare for the coming of our Salvation: "Jesus Christ" our Lord! This sacred time drew us nearer to the Divine Love of God while waiting for the word made flesh! As a parish family we imitated the Blessed Mother, Saint Joseph and John the Baptist and brought focus to have our hearts follow. The "Keep Christ in Christmas" and "Wise Men Still Seek Him" signs in 700 yards in countless neighborhoods reflected what we were encountering in our hearts.

A slogan without a product is a dead campaign. I want you to know that I could feel the love of the coming of Christ pouring forth from you and growing week to week as you prepared and practiced for this great feast. From the many of you that I caught stopping in the church to make a visit during the day, evening and night to the hundreds who approached the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the penance services and the numerous families who brought their statue of the infant child to Mass for a blessing. The true meaning of Christmas was not lost amidst the noise and rush!

All along while I waited for the celebration of the Christmas Liturgies I read and prayed my Christmas cards that I received from you. My mediation was deep and real in the spirit of the journey to Bethlehem and my prayers were sincere and heartfelt for the senders of the cards. How beautiful the words spoke of the Birth of the Savior and how often they reflected blessings for me as your pastor! This activity filled me with "joy" and affirmed the fact that I am truly "Blessed" to be a priest and your pastor.

Today we celebrate this great Feast of our Salvation and we do so with that interior focus of Our Lady and Mother allowing our hearts to "Magnify the Lord" while our preparation and practice of the Advent mission will allow us to enter here as shepherds and leave as Kings. Humbled by the invitation to share in His birth and to leave honored to share in His Love.

I want to thank you for always taking seriously the missions that I put forth for you each and every Sunday during the year. I mostly appreciate your desire to complete your missions faithfully during Advent and into the celebration of Christmas. The Mass affords the priest to speak powerfully by proclaiming the Gospel, preaching the Good News and annunciating the words of consecration. This power and grace comes from priesthood and is a blessing and privilege to act out in your presence. The greatest affirmation of the Mass for the priest is that these words and actions are not lost on his people. You receive them with Faith and you go forth and live them in love. I thank you for this and it is the greatest among the many gifts I have received this Christmas.



Angels Corner

Candles

Sanctuary Candle: In Memory of Bob Brackney by Irwin Lodge #236

Easter Flame Candle: In Memory of Vilichka Vasileva by Friends

Divine Mercy Candle: In Memory of Jerold Gesmond by Dan & Joan

St. Peregrine Candle: In Memory of Michael Scott Borland by Mom

Altar Candles for the Month of December:

In Memory of Jud Shiffler by Family

ADVENT Candles In Memory of Joe, Jinny, Beverly, Mary Jo and John Ott



December 25th - Christmas

Isaiah 62:1-5

Acts 13:16-17; 22-25

Matthew 1:18-25

January 1st - The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Numbers 6:22-27 Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:16-21

Prayers and Sympathy

Prayers and sympathy for the Taylor family on the loss of Andrea Taylor who died recently and for Donnie Darragh whose father Donald Darragh who died recently. May they rest in Peace.

Eucharistic Adoration



is held every Tuesday beginning after morning Mass. If you need to leave and there is no one else in the church during Adoration, please call the church office at 724-863-9550 and someone will come over. Thank you

Join us for the Divine Mercy Chaplet Monday through Friday at 3:00 PM.

Stewardship Corner

Weekly Offering

Sunday Offertory Week of Dec. 3rd - 4th, \$18,940.35

OSV 12/5 - 12/11, 2022 \$3,633.92

Don't forget that Immaculate Conception has online giving available to our members. https://www.icirwin.org/giving/funds



ueen of Angels Catholic
School would like to wish all
our families and friends throughout
the community bountiful Christmas
blessings of PEACE, HEALTH, and
HAPPINESS during this holy season
and in the new year.

Blessing of A Christmas Creche



God of Mary and Joseph, of shepherds and animals,

Bless us whenever we gaze on this manger scene.

Through all the days of Christmas may these figures tell the story of how humans, angels, and animals found the Christ in this poor place.

Fill our house with hospitality, joy, gentleness, and thanksgiving and guide our steps in the way of peace.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



CHRISTMAS is filled with symbols – here are a few legends and meanings associated with some popular traditions, activities and decorations. All of them can be beautiful, joyful, and even fun reminders of the true meaning of Christmas – The Birth of Jesus Christ.

CHRISTMAS: Christ's Mass - the celebration of His birth.

XMAS: While Xmas might seem a secular way to "cross Christ out of Christmas", take heart as the word can also be seen as a Christian abbreviation for Christmas. Christ was often written as XP (chi rho), an ancient Greek symbol. But, still so much better to spell it out!!



STAR: The Christmas Star guided the Three Kings to the manger.

HOLLY: The jagged edges of the holly leaf remind Christians of the crown of thorns; the red holly berries represent Christ's blood.

MISTLETOE: A Christmas symbol of love and a reminder that God loves us. Mistletoe lives off the tree to which it is attached. If it were taken from the tree, and if any person removed from God's love, both would no longer live.

CHRISTMAS TREE/EVERGREENS: They retain green needles or leaves all year round, symbolizing perseverance, resiliency and hope.



GIFTS: Our greatest gift, of course, is Jesus. The wise men who brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to honor the infant king inspired the concept of gift-giving at Christmas.



TINSEL: A legend tells of a poor, faithful family who wished to decorate a Christmas tree in honor of the Christ Child but who had no money for decorations. In the night, spiders came and spun webs across the tree. The Christ Child, honoring the family's faith, turned the threads into silver.



CANDLES AND CHRISTMAS LIGHTS: They represent Christ, the Light of the World.



BELLS: They herald joyful celebrations. Historically, bells were part of the Jewish high priest's garb. Christmas bells not only symbolize the joy of Christmas; they also remind us that Christ is the High Priest.

CANDY CANE: Shaped like a shepherd's crook, it reminds us that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came into our world at Christmas. The red stripe symbolizes Christ's sacrifice and the white background His purity.



GINGERBREAD MAN: Remind us of God's creation of Adam in the Garden of Eden, and God's creation of each of us. Spices make the gingerbread man the color of earth (Adam was created from the dust of the earth). Also, like us, gingerbread people are not immortal (after all, we eat them!!)



SANTA CLAUS: Santa Claus, of course, is an alteration of Saint Nicholas whose generosity was transferred to the "jolly old man" who delivers gifts anonymously on Christmas Eve.



WREATH: Wreaths can combine several Christmas symbols including holly, evergreens, tinsel, lights, candles, etc., and due to the circular shape, symbolizes eternity, the circle of life, and endless hope.



STOCKING: Filling stockings with gifts comes from another tradition regarding Saint Nicholas. One legend is that three poor women in need of marriage dowries, hung their stockings by the fireplace to dry. The saint, aware of their plight, threw money into their house, landing in the stockings.



REINDEER: Because Santa Claus, a.k.a. St. Nicholas, was popular in Scandinavia (where reindeer live), they became associated with him.



CHRISTMAS CAROLS: Carols remind us of the angels who announced the birth of Christ by singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth!"



SNOWMAN: Associated with Christmas in the Northern Hemisphere, where snow often covers the ground at this season. As snowmen melt in the warmth of the sun, so our cold hearts will melt when we understand the Son's love and sacrifice for us.



RED and **GREEN**: Red is the color of holly berries and green the color of evergreens, both of which are associated with Christmas. Red reminds us of the blood of Christ, and green is the color of grass and vegetation - life.



ANGEL: God's messengers.



POINSETTIA: One story about this Christmas flower involves a poor Mexican girl who had no gift to present the Christ Child at Christmas Eve services. She made a small bouquet of common roadside weeds and sheepishly presented them at the nativity scene. Suddenly, the bouquet burst into star-shaped blooms of brilliant red, and became known as Flowers of the Holy Night.

Irwin, Pennsylvania

Office of Liturgical Music Ministry

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD VIGIL MASS

December 24, 2022 - Order of the Mass 4:00 pm; 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm

VOCATIONS PRAYER

Lord Jesus, raise up from our homes those called by the Father: courageous and humble men to the Priesthood, generous servants to the Permanent Diaconate, faithful people to Consecrated Life, and holy men and women to the Sacrament of Marriage. Holy Spirit, help us to live our universal vocation to holiness by listening to the Father's voice and responding with a sacrificial love. Holy Mary, Model of vocations, pray for us. Amen.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

O Come All Ye Faithful



GLORIA



THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

Isaiah 62:1-5

For Zion's sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her vindication shines forth like the dawn and her victory like a burning torch. Nations shall behold your vindication, and all the kings your glory; you shall be called by a new name pronounced by the mouth of the LORD. You shall be a glorious crown in the hand of the LORD, a royal diadem held by your God. No more shall people call you "Forsaken," or your land "Desolate," but you shall be called "My Delight," and your land "Espoused." For the LORD delights in you and makes your land his spouse. As a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 89 Michel Guimont

For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

SECOND READING

Acts 13:16-17, 22-25

When Paul reached Antioch in Pisidia and entered the synagogue, he stood up, motioned with his hand, and said, "Fellow Israelites and you others who are Godfearing, listen. The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and exalted the people during their sojourn in the land of Egypt. With uplifted arm he led them out of it. Then he removed Saul and raised up David as king; of him he testified, 'I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will carry out my every wish.' From this man's descendants God, according to his promise, has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus. John

Heralded his coming by proclaiming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel; and as John was completing his course, he would say, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. Behold, one is coming after me; I am not worthy to unfasten the sandals of his feet."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Iesus.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Creed

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of Gifts

Of the Father's Love Begotten



Text: 87 87 87 7; verses 1–4, Corde natus ex parentis; Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348–413; tr. by John M. Neale, 1818–1866, and Henry W. Baker, 1827–1877, alt.; verse 5, Horatius Bonar, 1808–1889. Music: Sanctus trope, 11th cent.; Chant, Mode V; adapt. fr. Piae Cantiones, 1582.

EUCHARISTIC ACCLAMATIONS

Mass for the City Richard Proulx



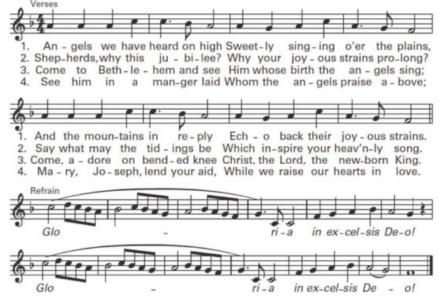
Text: ICEL, © 2010 Music: Mass for the City, Richard Proulx, © 1991, 2010, GIA Publications, Inc.

LAMB OF GOD



Holy Cross Mass David Clark Isele

Music: Holy Cross Mass, David Clark Isele, © 1979, GIA Publications, Inc.



Text: 77 77 with refrain; trad. French carol, ca. 18th cent.; tr. fr. Crown of Jesus Music, II, London, 1862; tr. by James Chadwick, 1813–1882, and others, alt. Music: Trad. French carol. GLORIA

RECESSIONAL HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



Text: 77 77 D with refrain; Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.
Music: Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–1847; arr. by William H. Cummings, 1831–1915. MENDELSSOHN











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