



O Holy Night

"Cantique de Noel" was premiered in Roquemaure, France at Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve of 1847.

It had its humble beginnings in 1843 when the parish priest of Roquemaure asked a wine merchant and Mayor of Roquemaure, Placide Cappeau, known more for his poetry than his church attendance to write a poem for the

Christmas mass. He accepted and in a dusty coach on a bumpy road to the Capital of France, he sat back and imagined what it was like to witness the birth of Jesus Christ. When reaching Paris, the poem "Minut Cretiens" (*Midnight Christians*) was penned. He realized this poem needed a musician's hand, and he was not musically inclined. His friend, Adolph Charles Adams was known all over the world and was requested to write musical scores for many orchestras and ballets, so he asked him. That same year Adams married the words of this beautiful poem to an original musical score and it became "Cantique de Noel." It wasn't until 1847 the song officially premiered and was sung by opera singer, Emily Laurey to celebrate the church organ that was renovated the end of 1843.

This link will take you to how the song sounded originally in French:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzAQ9IbJ9yM>

Minut Cretians Poem

Minuit, chrétiens, c'est l'heure solennelle,
Où l'Homme Dieu descendit jusqu'à nous
Pour effacer la tache originelle
Et de Son Père arrêter le courroux.
Le monde entier tressaille d'espérance
En cette nuit qui lui donne un Sauveur.

Peuple à genoux, attends ta délivrance.
Noël, Noël, voici le Rédempteur,
Noël, Noël, voici le Rédempteur!

De notre foi que la lumière ardente
Nous guide tous au berceau de l'Enfant,
Comme autrefois une étoile brillante
Y conduisit les chefs de l'Orient.
Le Roi des rois naît dans une humble crèche
Puissants du jour, fiers de votre grandeur,

A votre orgueil, c'est de là que Dieu prêche.
Courbez vos fronts devant le Rédempteur.
Courbez vos fronts devant le Rédempteur.

Le Rédempteur a brisé toute entrave
La terre est libre, et le ciel est ouvert.
Il voit un frère où n'était qu'un esclave,
L'amour unit ceux qu'enchaînait le fer.
Qui lui dira notre reconnaissance,
C'est pour nous tous qu'il naît, qu'il souffre et meurt.

Peuple debout! Chante ta délivrance,
Noël, Noël, chantons le Rédempteur,
Noël, Noël, chantons le Rédempteur!

Literal English Translation

Midnight, Christians, is the solemn hour,
When God, as man, descended unto us
To erase the stain of original sin
And to end the wrath of His Father.
The entire world thrills with hope
On this night that gives it a Saviour.

People, kneel down, await your deliverance.
Christmas, Christmas, here is the Redeemer,
Christmas, Christmas, here is the Redeemer,

May the ardent light of our Faith
Guide us all to the cradle of the infant,
As in ancient times a brilliant star
Guided the Oriental kings there.
The King of Kings was born in a humble manger;
O mighty ones of today, proud of your greatness,

It is to your pride that God preaches.
Bow your heads before the Redeemer!
Bow your heads before the Redeemer!

The Redeemer has broken every bond:
The Earth is free, and Heaven is open.
He sees a brother where there was only a slave.
Love unites those that iron has chained.
Who will tell Him of our gratitude,
For all of us He is born, He suffers and dies.

People, stand up! Sing your deliverance,
Christmas, Christmas, sing of the Redeemer,
Christmas, Christmas, sing of the Redeemer!

O Holy Night

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;
O night divine, O night, O night Divine.

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming,
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here come the wise men from the Orient land.
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger;
In all our trials born to be our friend.

He knows our need, to our weaknesses no stranger,
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!
Behold your King, Before Him lowly bend!

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother;
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy name.

Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name forever,
His power and glory evermore proclaim.
His power and glory evermore proclaim.

Unitarian Minister John Sullivan Dwight, Editor of *Dwights Journal of Music* wrote the lyrics in 1855 and gave the song the name "O Holy Night."

Ever since then, this song, as we know it, "O Holy Night" has been a part of the Christmas season some one hundred and seventy two years later. It is sung worldwide and translated into many languages.

Hands in Praise, an American Sign Language Christian choir has translated the Chorus and two verses printed in green of the song into American Sign Language (ASL) and will sign it during this 2025-26 holiday season. **The public is invited to the following church services where O Holy Night will be part of the worship service:**



The ASL version visually takes you to that place in your mind where you, like the poet, Placide Chapeau, imagined what it was like to be there. You are transported to another dimension within this beautiful song.

"HANDS IN PRAISE" is an American Sign Language (ASL) Christian choir sponsored by Bethel Lutheran Church, Windsor, Colorado.

For information, go to www.HandsInPraiseASL.com or HandsInPraiseInfo@gmail.com.
You are invited to join and no experience needed as sign language is learned one song at a time.
Please feel free to take this praise sheet home with you to read later or share with others.

O Holy Night song history written by Katherine M. Rickart in memory of her Aunt Karla Lind, who taught her the joy of learning the history of hymns and appreciating the lyrics in various forms in search for the real meaning - historically musically, by reading the lyrics without the music, as well as singing them.
Becoming a member of the Hands In Praise is another form of that search for the real meaning of a hymns.