

St. Gregory's Christmas Pageant Script Year A (2004)

Cast (in order of appearance):

Cantor (to lead the Carols):

Two mute stagehands:

(To set scenes, One will assume the role of The Cherry Tree in Scene 2.)

Quartet (to provide transition and pantomime music,):

The Angel Gabriel:

Mary:

Joseph :

The Donkey:

Salome:

James (son of Salome):

Zebulon (a rich traveler):

Angels: (7 approx.)

Shepherds:

Shepherd 1:

Shepherd 2:

Shepherd 3:

Sheep and Goats (non-speaking roles): (6 approx.)

Jesus:

Three Kings:

Balthazar:

Melchior:

Caspar:

The Pages (non-speaking role): (4 approx.)

The Star:

Deacon or Cantor explains that everyone will share in telling this story by singing some familiar songs.

Cantor rehearses any unfamiliar pieces to be sung by congregation. Ends rehearsal with:

CAROL 1: Lo, How a Rose, verses 1 & 3

Lo! How a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
As seers of old have sung.
It came, a blossom bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

O Flower, whose fragrance tender
With sweetness fills the air,
Dispell in glorious splendor,
The darkness everywhere;
True man, yet very God,
From sin and death now save us,
And share our every load.

Scene 1: Nazareth—The Annunciation

Gabriel, Mary

“Mary’s Room” on a sign hangs out front.

Quartet sings “Nova” while stage hands set up chair and sign, and Mary enters and sits.

Quartet: *Nova! Nova! ‘Ave’ fit ex ‘Eva.’*
 Gabriell off hye degree,
 He cam down from Trinite
 To Nazareth in Galile.
 Nova! nova!
 Then seid the mayden verely:
 ‘I am youre servaunt right truly.
 Ecce ancilla Domini.’
 Nova! Nova!

Gabriel (*from above*): God’s people, be not afraid. I am Gabriel, an angel. I am sent by God to deliver good news—to all of you—but most especially to a young girl named Mary. She lives in a city far away, in Nazareth. I descend now from Heaven, to let you know what I have to say, just as fast as any angel can.

(Gabriel comes down from the Christmas loft as following dialogue and action continues. Mary stands.)

Mary: My name is Mary. This is my home in Nazareth. I want to tell you that I’ll be married soon to a man named Joseph. I’m quite young, as you can see. But I’m prepared for marriage, and anything else that God sends my way...I think.

(Gabriel enters the house)

Gabriel: Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with you!

Mary: *(startled)* What are you?

Gabriel: I am the Angel Gabriel. Be not afraid. I’ve come to tell you something important, a message from God.

Mary: God is sending ME a message?

Gabriel: Yes. *(kneels)*. For you are to be the mother of God. You will bear a son, and his name will be Jesus. He will be the Son of the Most High.

Mary: Angel, I can’t be the one you seek. What you say can’t be true. How can this be? I have no husband! I am a virgin! A girl!

Gabriel: *(rising)* You will bear a child, nonetheless, by the Holy Spirit. Through God all things are possible. As much as you love Him, He loves you more.

Mary: I know.

Gabriel: Then you will believe me when I say you will bear God's son.

Mary: I am only a handmaid to God.

Gabriel: And his name will be Jesus.

Mary: Jesus?

Gabriel: Jesus. (*departs*)

Mary: Angel, wait!

Gabriel: Jesus.

Mary: Angel! I don't understand you! What will Joseph say about this? Angel? How can a poor girl like me care for the son of God? What shall I do?

Gabriel: (*from afar*) Jesus.

Mary: (*kneeling, after a time, in prayer*) Jesus. Emmanuel. (*exits*)

Carol 2: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel!
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
Who orderest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Scene 2: An Orchard on the Road to Bethlehem

Joseph, Mary, their donkey

Stage hands change sign to "An Orchard". Joseph, Mary (great with young), and their donkey enter. Joseph and Mary pantomime the action described by the Quartet.

The Cherry Tree Carol:

Quartet: Joseph and Mary walked through an orchard good,
Where was cherries and berries, as red as any blood.
(the stagehands bring in a berry bush and a tree with cherries)

O then bespoke Mary, so meek and so mild:
'Pluck me a cherry, Joseph; they run so in my mind.'

O then bespoke Joseph, with words most reviled:
(he turns on Mary)
'Let him pluck thee a cherry that brought thee with child.'

O then bespoke Jesus, all in his mother's womb:
'Bow down, then, thou tallest tree, for my mother to have some!

Then bowed down the tallest tree, it bent to Mary's hand;
(tree bends down)
Then she cried: "See, Joseph, I have cherries at command.'

O then bespoke Joseph: I have done Mary wrong.
But cheer up, me dearest, and do not be cast down!

Then Mary plucked a cherry, as red as any blood;
And she did travel onward, all with her heavy load.

(Exuent.)

Scene 3: Bethlehem—The Inn
Salome, James, Zebulon, Mary, Joseph
Stagehand changes sign to “Vacancy”

(Enter Salome and James).

Salome: My name is Salome, and this is my son, James. We live here in Bethlehem, in a little stucco house, right off the main road.

James: It’s an inn!

Salome: Well, we’re calling it an inn because we need the money. Since the Roman emperor is making people go back to their hometowns to register in his census, James and I are renting out our house to travelers. This is King David’s town! We’re bound to get lots of guests!

(Enter Zebulon, who thumps his walking stick on the ground)

James: Mother, we’ve got our first guest!

Salome: *(primping)* Oh! James, now remember: be polite, and try to look as pitiful as you can. We’re not giving up our room for anything less than 10 shekels.

(Zebulon thumps his stick once more)

Salome: Coming!

(Salome and James open the door)

Zebulon: I say, would you have a room for the night?

James: Do you have a reservation, sir?

Zebulon: What’s that, boy? A reservation? I should say not! But I have 50 shekels to spend for a feast and a warm bed.

Salome: Welcome to our Inn, sir! I’ll begin cooking right away!

James: Payment in advance, please.

Zebulon: My boy, you have a bright future ahead. *(counts out 50 shekels into James’s hand)* Name’s Zebulon. Next time you’re in downtown Jerusalem, I want you to look me up.

Salome: *(eyeing the money)* James, show our guest to his suite.

James: Yes, Mother. *(leads Zebulon offstage)*

Salome: Praise God! 50 shekels will be enough to feed us both through half of next year! It will be worth sleeping in the stable tonight for that. Guess I’ll take down our “Vacancy” sign.

(goes to front of house and begins to take down sign. Enter Mary, Joseph and Donkey)

Salome: *(peering into the distance)* Wait a minute: more travelers? *(changes sign to read "No Vacancy")*. Looks like they're out of luck. *(peers at them again)*. Hmm...that's a strange looking donkey if you ask me...

Mary: Joseph, there's a light up ahead. I think it might be another inn.

Joseph: Mary, even if it is, there will be no room for us. Every place in the town is already filled with travelers.

Mary: But let's try all the same. I'm so tired. And our donkey keeps falling asleep on the road.

(the Donkey lays down to sleep)

Joseph: *(rousing the donkey)*. Get up! Get up! Just a little ways more, my friend!

(the group proceeds to the inn).

Joseph: *(reading the sign)* No Vacancy.

Salome: *(entering from inside the inn)* Yes, my good man, we're filled up for the night: important guests from Jerusalem.

(the Donkey lays down to sleep)

Mary: *(to the Donkey)*. Oh no! Please behave! Please get up!

Joseph: *(to Salome)*. Good woman, please have pity on us. My wife is with child, and we've walked here all the way from Nazareth. Isn't there some small room where we can sleep?

Salome: I tell you, there's no room here. There's just one anyway, and it's occupied.

(James and Zebulon come out from the inn)

James: Mother, are you all right?

Zebulon: Is there a problem here? I hope not. After all, I've paid 50 shekels for peace and quiet.

James: Hey, what's wrong with that donkey?

Mary: *(kneels beside Donkey)* The poor thing is even more worn out than we are. Please: all we ask is a place to sleep for the night.

Salome: I wish I could help you.

James: Actually, we do have a room available. We call it The Stable. You can

stay there as long as you want!

Salome: James! The stable?!

James: It's only 60 shekels a night.

Zebulon: That's my boy!

Joseph: 60 shekels! All we have is 5!

James: Sorry, sir. Try the next town over.

(James and Zebulon high-five and begin to laugh)

Salome: *(to James and Zebulon)* Stop it, both of you! How can you laugh at these people! Oh, my dear, please get up *(helps Mary rise)*. Your hands are so cold! And you're so pale! You need to sleep. James is right: our stable is the only room we have, and you can stay there, if you'll have it.

Joseph: For 5 shekels?

Salome: For no shekels. You are my guests.

(James and Zebulon return inside the inn, shaking their heads).

Mary: God bless you!

Joseph: Thank you, dear woman!

Salome: *(not one to take a compliment)* Now let's get you settled. It's not getting any warmer out here. *(tugging at the Donkey's reins)* Come on, you! To the stable!

(Exeunt)

CAROL 3: Away in a Manger (#101 IN HYMNAL)

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay—
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Scene 4: The Hills of Bethlehem

Gabriel, Angels, Shepherds, Sheep and Goats

Stage hand changes sign to read: The Hills of Bethlehem.

(Enter Shepherds while quartet sings, with their Sheep and Goats, who begin to graze)

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

Quartet: While shepherds watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.

Gabriel: *(from above)* My friends, I have returned with wondrous news, so
wondrous that I have brought all of my assistants!

Angels: *(one Angel appears in window)* Gloria!

Gabriel: Angels, observe in the fields below: shepherds guarding their sheep.

Angels: *(another Angel or two appear in window; in unison)* Gloria in
Excelsis!

Shepherd 1: *(to the other Shepherds)* Sisters, did you hear anything just now?

Shepherd 2: Nothing but the crickets, Shepherd.

Shepherd 3: Nothing but the wind, Shepherd.

Angels: *(another Angel or two join those in the windows; in unison)* Gloria
in Excelsis!

Shepherd 1: No, I hear high voices and the flutter of wings.

Shepherd 2: From up above...

Shepherd 3: *(pointing)* From over there!

Angels: *(all angels, LOUDLY, in unison)* Gloria in Excelsis DEO!

(The Shepherds shout/scream in surprise and sink to the ground)

Gabriel: Be not afraid, Shepherds. I bring you news of great joy, which shall
come to all people. For unto us is born this day in Bethlehem a
Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Shepherd 1: *(rising)* A Savior?

Shepherd 2: The Lord?

Shepherd 3: In Nazareth?

Gabriel: Go and greet him now, the baby lying in a manger!

Angels: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among all people of goodwill!

Shepherd 1: Come: let's go into the town as fast as we can to greet our Savior!

(Shepherds gather Sheep and Goats and lead them off. Angels disappear)

CAROL 4: Angels We Have Heard On High

Angels we have heard on high,
Singing sweetly through the night,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their brave delight.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see,
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ, the Lord, the new-born King.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Scene 5: The Inn

Mary, Joseph, Jesus, their donkey, Salome, Shepherds, Sheep and Goats, Kings and Page, Zebulon, James

Sign is changed back to "No Vacancy" Mary, Joseph and Jesus sit backstage, in the stable with The Donkey, Angels (without Gabriel) standing behind them.

Salome: *(Entering)* What is going on here tonight? There were sounds coming from the stable: it sounded almost like a baby crying! And now all this ruckus coming from the road. *(peers into the night)*. Sounds like a herd of goats!

(Enter Shepherds, Sheep and Goats)

Shepherd 1: Hellooooo! Where is the Savior?

Shepherd 2: Where is the Lord?

Shepherd 3: Where is the little baby in the manger?

Salome: Shepherds! At this hour! *(to the Shepherds)* Listen, all of you, stop right there. There's no vacancy here in this inn. Not even in the stable out back!

Shepherd 1: The stable?

Shepherd 2: Does it have a manger in it?

Shepherd 3: And a baby?

Salome: *(suspiciously)* You're awfully nose for a bunch of shepherds.

Shepherd 1: Madam, if you don't mind, we'll just take a look out back!

Shepherd 2: Come on!

(Shepherds, with Sheep and Goats process backstage and arrange themselves around the Holy Family).

Salome: *(to the Shepherds)* Wait a minute!

(The Three Kings enter from back of church with the star leading; the star is a large Moravian star, illuminated, on a long stick)

Balth. *(shouting)* The star! I see it clearly!

Melch. It shines over there, over that stable in the distance!

Caspar Just as I predicted!

Balth & Melch Just as WE predicted!

Salome: What is it this time! *(peering into the distance)* More strange people headed this way! All dressed up like kings at a banquet! I've got to get James! *(exits)*.

CAROL 5: We Three Kings

We three kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts, we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor an mountain,
Following yonder star.

O, Star of Wonder, Star of Night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.

Glorious now behold him arise,
King and God, and sacrifice.
Heaven sing: 'Alleluia';
"Alleluia" the earth replies.

O, Star of Wonder, Star of Night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.

(The Kings, led by The Star, process from back to front of the church during the carol).

Balth. Behold the King of Kings!

Melch. Behold the Lord of Hosts!

Caspar: Behold the Son of Mary!

(Enter Salome and James, in a terrified embrace, followed by a meek Zebulon)

Salome: Your highnesses, I am only a poor woman! Have mercy upon me and my son James!

Zebulon: And me, a poor, poor man from Jerusalem! You can have my room!

James: For free!

Balth: *(laughing)* We did not come for your room, good man! We've come from far, from the East, following this star...

(The Star bows or curtseys)

...to find the Savior of the World.

Melch: And we have found him, as we knew we would, lying here in this manger. We've brought him gifts.

Balth: I bring him gold, a sign of royalty.

Melch: I bring him frankincense, a sign of praise.

Caspar: And I bring him myrrh, a sign of the doom of death.

Shepherd 1: And we shepherds have brought him what we could: fresh water from the hills!

Shepherd 2: Oil for a lamp to be lit!

Shepherd 3: And a young lamb to keep him warm in the night.

Salome: But I have nothing to give him. Nothing but a cold and dirty stable. Nothing but...James! Where is the money?

James: What, Mother?

Salome: The 50 shekels we were paid! Go and fetch them!

James: But Mother!

Salome: Do as I say! It will be our gift to the child who was born to save us. James?

(James begins to exit).

Mary: Dear woman, be content. My son has no need of your money. He was born to be the king of the poor. Poor he will live, and poor he will die, and rich beyond all imagining.

Salome: But I don't understand!

Joseph: Join us in our happiness this night!

Shepherd 3: Come to see the baby!

Quartet: Then Mary took her young son and set him on her knee,
Saying: 'My dear son, tell me how this world shall be!'

'O I shall be as dead, mother, as the stones in the wall,
And the stones in the streets, mother, shall mourn for me all.

'And upon a Wednesday my vow I will make,
And upon Good Friday my death I will take.

'And upon the third day my uprising shall be,
And the sun and moon together shall rise up with me.

'The people shall rejoice, and the birds they shall sing
To see the uprising of the heavenly King.'

Congregation: 'The people shall rejoice, and the birds they shall sing
To see the uprising of the heavenly King.'

(During the quartet Shepherd 3 takes Salome by the hand and leads her to the baby. Salome stands, overcome, and then sinks slowly to her knees. James and Zebulon follow, meekly, and bow before the baby).

Salome: *(faintly)* Glory to God in the Highest. *(louder)* Glory to God in the Highest.

All: Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace among all people of goodwill!

CAROL 6: Silent Night

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm; all is bright;
Round yon virgin, Mother and Child,
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace!
Sleep in heavenly peace!

Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant, beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth!

Gabriel: *(entering)* The heavens rejoice!
 The pageant is done!
 Lift up all your voices to welcome God's son!

CAROL 7: Joy to the World!

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King.
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing!

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns:
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy!

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love!

THE END.