

# *Location of Bethlehem in Israel*



*Bethlehem:  
Shepherds Fields*



Did you realize that this is the last Christmas we'll be praying the words of the Mass the way they are now?

*Bethlehem:  
Shepherds Field Church*



Next Christmas our noses are going to be buried in our worship aids reading the new translations of our prayers of the Mass.

*Bethlehem: Mural in Shepherds  
Fields Church*



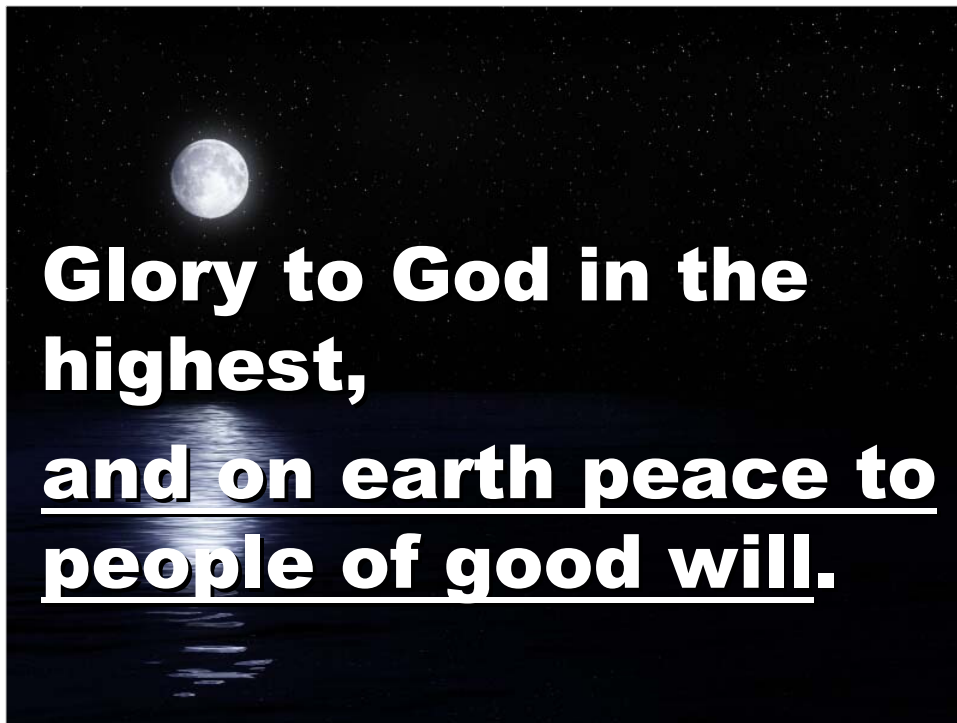
This Christmas is the perfect time to prepare us for one of these retranslated prayers of the Mass. Guess which one it is? [Hint: we've prayed it already.] [What did the angels say when they appeared to the shepherds after Jesus was born?]



The *Gloria*! The *Gloria*, the “Glory to God in the Highest.” It reminds us about Christmas every time we pray it at Mass, because it starts out with those words in the Gospel sung by the angels to the shepherds-in-the-field after Jesus’s birth: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.”

The *Gloria* goes back to the first century, almost to the beginning of Christianity. Think about that: the *Gloria* connects us to practically all the Catholic Christians who have ever lived. They’ve all known this hymn.

Its new translation is going to appear on the screens now.

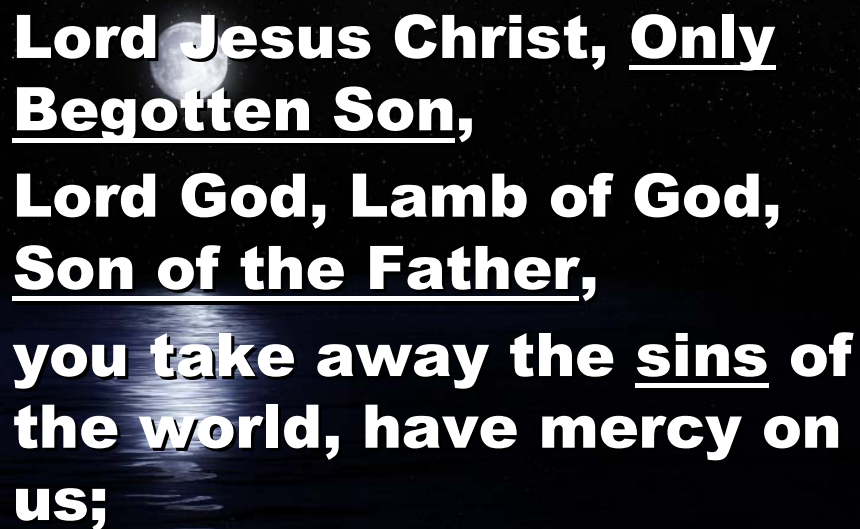


Let's pray it together. The words that have changed are underlined.

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

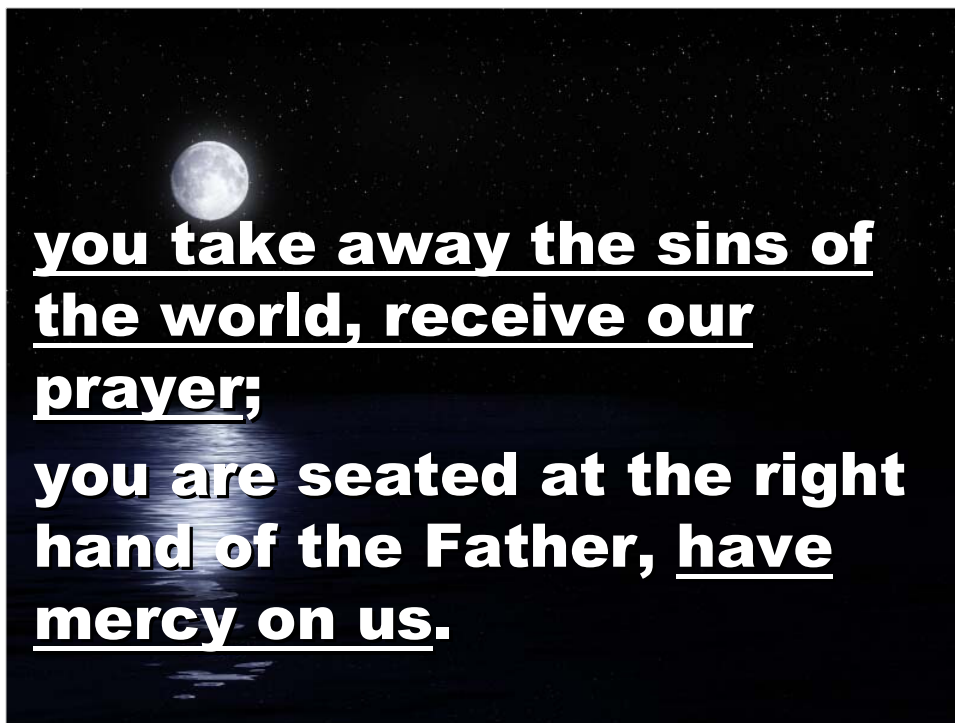
**We praise you,**  
**we bless you,**  
**we adore you,**  
**we glorify you,**  
**we give you thanks for**  
**your great glory,**  
**Lord God, heavenly King,**  
**O God, almighty Father.**

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.



**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of  
the world, have mercy on  
us;**

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on  
us;



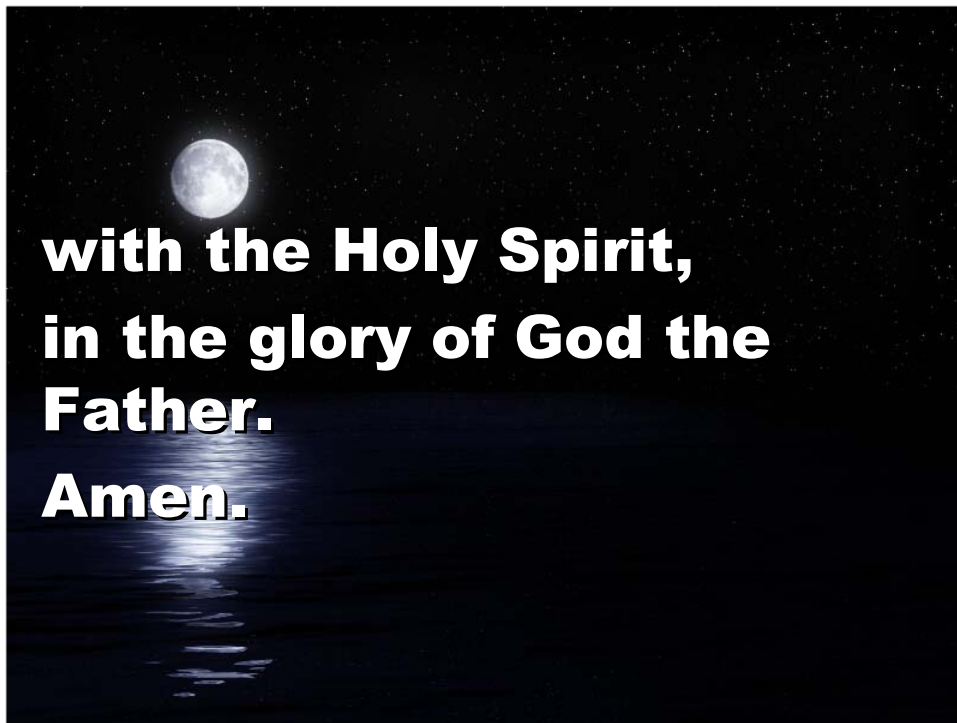
you take away the sins of the world, receive our  
prayer;

you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have  
mercy on us.



**For you alone are the Holy  
One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most  
High,  
Jesus Christ,**

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,



with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

*Angels announce birth  
of Jesus*



The Gloria is a Christmas hymn, because it starts with the angels' song. The angels are stating 2 facts: that the birth of Christ gives glory to God, and that Christ's birth brings peace to God's people.

## *Annunciation to the Shepherds*



The birth of Christ gives glory to God. Jesus's life doesn't begin on Christmas. Jesus, the Son of God, has been at his Father's side for all eternity before this.

## *Shepherds in Modern Bethlehem*



Then one day his Father said: You know, Son, human beings are the pride and joy of my creation. I thought they would love me for creating them.

*Mural inside Shepherds  
Fields Church*



But they're brats: selfish, disobedient, rebellious, sinful. But I still love them, because they're my children. I have a plan to make things right again between them and me. I'd like you to become human, to put yourself in human skin. Then you'll give God a face. You'll make God visible to them, you'll reveal me, you'll show them who I am. And by doing this, you can lead them back to me. You'll save them. And Jesus says yes; he's obedient to his Father's will. That's how the birth of Christ gives glory to God our Father.

## *Bethlehem: Mural in Shepherds Fields Church*



The angels also announce that Christ's birth brings peace to God's people. This means Christ's birth makes peace between humanity and God the Father. The angels are singing about the peace, the redemption, the salvation of God's people, that God is bringing us through the human birth of Jesus Christ. Christ's birth reconciles us to our Father. The ultimate peace God gives his people is reconciliation with him, salvation and eternal life with him. It all starts on Christmas. The angels are singing about God's favor to us by inviting us to join his Kingdom through his Son Jesus.

*Bethlehem:  
Church of the Nativity*



The Gloria is a Christmas hymn, because it thanks God the Father for all of his gifts, especially his greatest gift to us: the birth in human flesh of his Son, Jesus Christ. So in the Gloria we repeatedly praise God our Father, we're just gushing – gushing with enthusiasm and gratitude. “We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory.” These words were cut out of the English translation in 1970 because they were thought to be too repetitious. That's the whole point! And that's why they're coming back in this prayer. Because we can't say enough about the greatness, the glory, of God.

*Looking down to the  
cave of Christ's birth*



The Gloria is a Christmas hymn, because it thanks Jesus for becoming human. When Jesus fused his divinity with our humanity, our human flesh became forever part of who God is; Jesus has made our skin sacred.

*Cave where it's believed  
Jesus was born*



Once Jesus is incarnated, once he is begotten (meaning: not born in the usual way), human are reconciled with their Father. By being born, Jesus made it possible for each one of us to live in eternal glory with the Father. That's the ultimate Christmas gift. That's what we Christians celebrate today: our fresh start with God. Jesus becomes the way to our Father in heaven, if we'll just accept his invitation.

*Bethlehem:  
Manger Square*



We know the work of salvation isn't over yet. We don't have to look very far to see that our world is broken. But we also know that in spite of every obstacle put in front of the Kingdom of God, in the end, God's plan will prevail:

*"Adoration of the Shepherds"  
by Gerard van Hontorst*



glory will come to God the Father, and to God's people will come peace, salvation, eternal life with God. So today we join our voices with the angels. We praise God for his glory and for the peace, the salvation, the redemption, he launched through the birth of Jesus Christ.