

## THE STORY OF SILENT NIGHT



Silent Night was heard for the first time here in the former St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf, near Salzburg.

### THE FIRST PERFORMANCE

"It was the 24th of December of the year 1818, when the then assistant priest Joseph Mohr at the newly established parish of St. Nicholas in Oberndorf handed over to the organist, Franz Gruber (who at the time was also a school teacher in Arnsdorf) a poem, with the request to write a fitting melody for 2 solo voices together with choir and for accompaniment by guitar."

These are the words of Franz Xaver Gruber which he wrote on December 30, 1854 in his "Authentic Account of the Origin of the Christmas Carol, 'Silent Night, Holy Night!'" Later the same day, on the 24th of December, Gruber came to the musically talented Mohr and handed over to him his composition. As Mohr liked what he saw, this song was included in the Christmas mass that evening. Mohr sang the tenor part and provided accompaniment with guitar, while Gruber sang bass.

According to Gruber, the song was met with "general approval by all" in attendance. In Gruber's "Authentic Account," there is no mention of the specific inspiration for creating the song. One supposition is that the church organ was no longer working, so that Mohr and Gruber therefore created a song for accompaniment by guitar.

Surrounding this premiere performance of "Silent Night!" many romantic stories and legends have been written adding their own anecdotal details to the known facts. Silent Night was heard for the first time here in 1818 in former St. Nicholas church in Oberndorf near Salzburg.

We now know that Mohr created the text to the song already in 1816 during the time he served as an assistant priest in Mariapfarr in Lungau. The score autographed by Mohr which was discovered in 1995 - the only extant one autographed by Mohr - attests to the date of creation for the text. In the lower left is written: "Text von Joseph Mohr mpia Coadjutor 1816" ("Text by Joseph Mohr - confirmed by my own signature - assistant priest 1816").

After careful study by historians, it is estimated that this autograph was written between 1820 and 1825 while the "1816" after Mohr's name is believed to refer to the year in which Mohr created the text. This autographed score also provides a key statement in the upper right: "Melodie von Fr. Xav. Gruber" ("Melody by Fr. Xav. Gruber") and therewith clarifies conclusively the question many have asked over the years as to which man actually composed the melody to the song.

### THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

"Silent Night!" was created and first performed during very difficult times. The Napoleonic wars (1792-1815), which had caused great suffering, had come to an end. With the Congress of Vienna there were new borders and a new order set for Europe. In the course of these events, the ecclesiastical Principality of Salzburg lost its status as an independent country and was forced to secularize. In 1816, its lands were divided in two with part assigned to Bavaria and the larger portion relegated to Austria.

The parish church of Mohr where he served from 1815-1817.



The site where "Silent Night!" was first performed - Oberndorf by Salzburg - had been a suburb and was now separated from its town center of Laufen located across the river (today part of Bavaria, Germany) when the Salzach River became the new border. For centuries transportation of salt along the river had provided the basis for the local economy. The salt trade declined during the Napoleonic wars, and then never fully recovered. This caused a depression in the local economy, with the transport companies, boat builders and laborers facing unemployment and an unsure future. It was during these troubled times that Mohr was in Oberndorf (1817-1819).

Mohr's previous place of service, Mariapfarr, had suffered greatly during the withdrawal of the Bavarian occupation troops in 1816 and 1817. Mohr was witness to these events and in 1816, he wrote the words to "Silent Night!" With this in mind, the creation of the 4th verse of "Silent Night!" takes on special meaning. Its text expresses a great longing for peace and comfort.

[www.stillenacht.at](http://www.stillenacht.at)

## PARISH DIRECTORY

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## REDEMPTORISTS

2465 CROWN STREET  
VANCOUVER  
B.C. V6R3V9  
ESTABLISHED 1923

### MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm  
(Anticipated Mass)  
Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm  
Monday – Wednesday 8am  
Thursday Mass/Novena:  
8am & 7pm  
Friday, Saturday, Holidays: 9am  
(Fridays in July & August: 8am)  
Reconciliation  
Saturday: 4-4:45pm  
Adoration  
Saturday 9:30-10am  
Library Hours  
Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

### STAFF

#### Pastor

Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.

#### Associate Pastor

Joseph Horo, C.Ss.R.

#### Office Manager

Virginia Fong

#### Pastoral Coordinator

Bertilla Watanabe

#### Bookkeeper

Corinna Siy

### IN RESIDENCE

Brendan Boland, C.Ss.R.  
William Comerford, C.Ss.R.

### CONTACT

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## OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

December 20, 2015

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Dear Parishioners,

With the whirlwind of 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary parish celebrations and Year of Mercy events around the world, one cannot help but feel the unfathomable abundance of God's graces upon us. It is not only a time of grace, mercy and forgiveness but also a time for renewed strength, courage and determination.

As you know, last Sunday cathedrals around the world opened their Holy Doors to usher in the Year of Mercy. In his homily at the opening of the Holy Door at Holy Rosary Cathedral, Archbishop Michael said, "In his gentleness, the Lord never forces open the door of our heart; he too asks permission to enter that sanctuary. The Jubilee is a freely offered gift, and its graces likewise are to be freely received."

Of great consolation to all are Pope Francis' words echoed by Archbishop Michael: "When you pass through the Holy Door...set aside all fear and dread, for these are inappropriate for those who are loved by God and who experience the joy of encountering the transforming grace of Christ. Do not be afraid: let yourself be embraced by the mercy of God who awaits you."

It may take some courage on our part to cross this threshold honestly. Each of us carries with us some burden of sin. "But now is 'the favourable time' to cross the threshold of the mercy of God who never tires of forgiving us, and who never tires of waiting for us on the other side of the door.

That is why I am extending this personal invitation to each of you to join me this Sunday afternoon 2-3pm for the Advent Reconciliation Service. There is no better time than now...a few days before Christmas. With warm wishes from all the clergy and myself to you and your families...a happy holy Christmas.

Yours in Christ,  
*Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R.*

Restore us O God, let your face shine that we may be saved. - Psalm 79

## NEWS & NOTICES

**Forty Hours Devotion:** Come and spend an hour in adoration with the Lord: Monday – Wednesday January 11-13 beginning with the 8am Mass and ending at 7pm. The sign-up sheet is at the front of the church. We would like to be sure that two people are present at all times.

**Office Hours & Final Donations for 2015:** Please note the office closes for the holidays at noon on Thurs Dec 24 and will reopen on Mon Jan 4. All donations for a 2015 tax receipt must arrive at the Parish office by noon on Christmas eve. Thank you!

**Theology of the Body Course:** Come and discover God's original design for us, our call to holiness, and our destiny with him in heaven. Instructor: Fr. Alan Boisclair, BA, MDiv, STL (Marriage and the Family).

- Jan. 11 to April 4, from 7 to 9:15pm at St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Vancouver
  - Jan. 13 to April 6, from 7 to 9:15pm at St. John Paul II Pastoral Centre, Vancouver
- To register, visit [rcav.org/TOB](http://rcav.org/TOB). For more information, contact 604-683-0281 ext. 50246.

**Archbishop's Annual Mass for Life:** Join Archbishop Miller for the annual Mass for Life on Monday, Dec. 28 at Holy Rosary Cathedral, Vancouver for 12:10 Mass. Unfortunately, there won't be a reception this year due to the hall being closed.

**Special Indulgence for the Year of Mercy:** You will receive a Plenary Indulgence if you partake devoutly in a sacred function or a public pious exercise offered on Fridays in the Jubilee Year of Mercy beginning December 8, 2015 and concluding on November 18, 2016. This act is to be accompanied by an Our Father and/or Hail Mary or some other prayers of one's choice for the Pope's intentions, Sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion and Prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father.

**Prison Ministry Christmas Cards and 2016 Calendar Drive:** Catholic Charities Justice Services (CCJS) is seeking donations of unused Christmas Cards and 2016 Calendars for prisoners. Calendars may be wall, desk, or appointment calendars. Please ensure donations are of a modest theme, suitable for prison chapels. Collection points: St. Mary's Chilliwack, St. Joseph's Mission, St. Nicholas Langley, Our Lady of Good Counsel Surrey, Christ the Redeemer West Vancouver, Holy Rosary Cathedral Vancouver, St. Mark's Vancouver. Items can also be mailed to CCJS Prison Ministry c/o St. Mary's Chilliwack, 8909 Mary Street, Chilliwack BC V2P 4J4. Deadline: Thursday, Jan. 14.

**OLPH School Open House:** The Open House for Jr. K to Grade 7 is on Wed. January 13th at 7pm. This will be the first opportunity to pick up an application package for the 2016-17 school year. Applications will be available on-line at the school website after January 13, 2016.

**Vancouver College Open House:** VC is a K-12 Catholic school for boys established by the Christian Brothers in 1922. Our Annual Open House for prospective students and families is on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, from 6:30 - 8:30 pm.

**Project Advance:** Thank you for your generous donation to Project Advance this year. Closing date for donations is Dec 31.

## Stewardship Reflection

*"For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy." (Luke 1:44)*

When you hear the scripture readings and Gospel reading each Sunday, do you "leap for joy?" If not, don't blame the lecturer or priest, rather look inside yourself. Do you prepare for Mass each week or do you just show up and expect to be entertained?

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St Louis

## JUBILEE CALENDAR

### DECEMBER EVENTS CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S MASS SCHEDULE

#### ADVENT RECONCILIATION

2-3pm Sunday December 20  
Weekly Confessions – Saturday  
4pm-4:45pm

#### CHRISTMAS MASSES

Thursday December 24  
5pm Family Mass (Families with young children)  
7pm Mass  
11:45pm Caroling  
12am Midnight Mass  
Friday December 25  
9am Mass  
11am Mass  
(No evening Mass)

#### NEW YEAR'S MASSES

(Holy Day of Obligation for Solemnity of Mary)  
Thursday December 31  
Adoration 6pm  
Thanksgiving Mass 7pm  
Friday January 1  
9am Mass  
11am Mass  
(No evening Mass)



OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP provides students with a positive learning environment in the light of the Catholic Faith.

We are a Kindergarten through Grade 7, double streamed co-ed school. We offer an excellent academic program along with a myriad of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

We warmly invite you to our Open House to view our faith and learning community. Application packages will be available this evening.

We also offer a 3 Year Old Preschool Program and a 4 Year Old Junior Kindergarten Program.

Come experience the Spirit of Our Lady's!

#### OPEN HOUSE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2016  
2550 Camosun Street, Vancouver  
7:00 – 8:00 PM

For more information call 604-228-8811 or visit [www.olphbc.ca](http://www.olphbc.ca)

(Application forms are available (after January 13) on-line or from the school office.)



Archbishop Miller opens the Holy Door at the Cathedral.



*"This begins a time of great forgiveness..."*

*- Pope Francis*

On Sunday Dec 13, 2015 cathedrals around the world opened a Holy Door as an extraordinary path to salvation for the faithful.

"Passing through the Holy Door is a concrete way for us to rediscover the infinite mercy of the Father who always welcomes us, his children, and who seeks us out to encounter us personally. It is he who opens the door for us. As I said upon opening our own Holy Door, "This is the Lord's gate: let us enter through it and obtain mercy and forgiveness."

*- Archbishop Michael Miller*

## HOLY DOORS OPEN AROUND THE WORLD

### Time for forgiveness has begun as Holy Doors open

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – With the opening the Holy Door at the Basilica of St. John Lateran, Pope Francis declared that the time for tenderness, joy and forgiveness had begun.

As holy doors around the world were opened at city cathedrals, major churches and sanctuaries Dec. 13, the pope said this simple gesture of opening God's house to the world serves as "an invitation to joy. The time of great pardon begins. It is the Jubilee of Mercy."

Dressed in rose vestments on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, marking the joyful expectation of Christmas, the pope began the ceremony outside the basilica in front of the bronze holy door. The door depicts a bas relief of the crucified Christ looking down on Mary tenderly holding the baby Jesus, whose small foot shone like bright gold from the countless kisses and touches of visiting pilgrims.

"This is the door of the Lord. Open for me the gates of justice. I will enter your house, Lord, because of your great mercy," the pope read solemnly before climbing two marble steps and pushing open the large door. He crossed the threshold decorated with a garland of flowers and greenery and bowed his head in silent prayer inside the darkened interior of the basilica. The church and the people of God are called to be joyful, the pope said in his brief homily.

With Christmas approaching, "we cannot allow ourselves to become tired, no form of sadness is allowed even if we have reason for it with the many worries and multiple forms of violence that wound our humanity," he said.

Amid the bullying, injustice and violence wrought, "above all, by men of power, God makes it known that he himself will rule his people, that he will never leave them at the mercy of the arrogance of their leaders and that he will free them of all anguish," the pope said.

*Catholic News Service*

### Toronto Redemptorist Parish Opens Its Holy Door

St. Patrick's Parish, the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Toronto Ontario opened its Holy Door on Sunday.

St. Patrick's has been served by the Redemptorists since 1881. Founded in 1732, the Redemptorists have been proclaiming the Good News of Plentiful Redemption throughout the world. The Motto and Crest, burned into the door speaks of that commitment to mission and confidence that Jesus is our Redeemer and invites us to share in that Mission of Proclamation through our lives and through the lives of people we serve.

### A MEDITATION FROM ST PATRICK'S PARISH ON THIS SACRED OCCASION

#### Jesus is our Redeemer

Jesus is the Door through which we enter to receive grace and experience God's Mercy and Plentiful Redemption. We approach the Holy Door with trust and confidence that God's love is greater than any human sin and that our Redeemer seeks us out as the Shepherd who looks for the one lost sheep.

Having entered through this Holy Door, we then exit the Church through another door that opens to the world. We are thus entrusted with this same Good News of Mercy and Plentiful Redemption to our families, communities and world that is in great need to experience this news proclaimed through us. As the disciples experienced the joy of the resurrection on Easter Morning, we are called to go out and proclaim as well.

#### Mary is the Model of Christian Discipleship

Having entered the Holy Door, we stand with her, knowing that she stands with us in our need, pointing us to her son, Jesus each step of the way. We address our prayers to Our Mother of Perpetual Help in our Shrine and Weekly Wednesday Devotions, knowing that she hears us, understands, and prays with us to our Lord and Redeemer.

*Scala News*