



PEACE

Silent Night

By: Steve Moorhouse

“Silent Night” is a song for the world. On Christmas Eve, two billion people will sing this beloved carol in over 300 languages and dialects. Put four different nationalities who speak four different languages in a taxi, and all could join in as one to sing “Silent Night.” The universal appeal of this song is often attributed to its mesmerizing melody and peaceful lyrics. Feelings of warmth, calm, and hope bring chills and tears. Many songs can elicit such passion, but are soon forgotten. Why has “Silent Night” continued to be sung? “Silent Night” has a unique power to unite hearts and change lives because it is the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Joseph Mohr was an illegitimate child who saw his share of personal struggles growing up. As a young man in Austria, all he could ever remember was war. Napoleon and his armies advanced across Europe, leaving behind hunger, devastation, and hopelessness. Joseph had a love of music and learned to play the guitar. He perceived that God was calling him to ministry, and his obedience to that call led him to become a priest. He was assigned to a small, struggling congregation in the village of Mariapar.

On a cool, peaceful starlit night in 1816, he was walking through the quiet village. He was inspired to write a six verse German poem entitled “Stille Nacht Heilige Nacht.” Two years later on Christmas Eve, he was in Oberndorf. The organ was broken in St. Nicholas parish, and a song was needed for midnight mass. He presented his poem to Franz Gruber, an acquaintance of his. Mr. Gruber wrote a melody for the lyrics in just a couple of hours. Two gifted, faithful men, filled with the Holy Spirit, collaborated to create and perform the carol.

Once the song debuted, it was Spirit driven across the globe. An organ builder and repair man working at the church took a copy to his home village. There, it was picked up and spread by two families of traveling folk singers.

The English version was translated from the original German by Bishop John Freeman Young.

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! Shepherds quake, at the sight! Glories stream from Heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia, Christ the Saviour is born! Christ the Saviour is born!*

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!

*Silent night! Holy night! Here at last, holy light from the heavenly kingdom sent, Abundant grace
for our intent. Jesus, salvation for all. Jesus, salvation for all.*

Silent night! Holy night! Sleeps the world in peace tonight. God sends His Son to earth below,

A Child from whom all blessings flow. Jesus, embraces mankind. Jesus, embraces mankind.

Silent night! Holy night! Mindful of mankind's plight. The Lord in Heav'n on high decreed

*From earthly woes we would be freed Jesus, God's promise of peace. Jesus, God's promise of
peace.*