

## 1 A Great Almighty Blunder

A great almighty blunder  
Seen by a candle's flame.  
The choir torn asunder,  
The crucifer's to blame.  
*Let's start the mass again.  
And get it right for certain,  
Then we can all say 'Amen.'*

When he approached the rood screen,  
Rather than walking straight.  
He took a sudden right turn,  
Which made the choir irate.  
*Let's start the mass again...*

The tenors sat in protest  
The basses roared with ire.  
The trebles simply whimpered,  
One set his cotta on fire.  
*Let's start the mass again...*

*(Tune: German carol melody)*

## 2 Away in the "Nine Bells"

Away in the "Nine Bells",  
no room at the bar,  
We sit in the "Snug" with  
our pipes and a jar.  
The logs in the fireplace  
all crackle and hiss,  
As we laze in the warmth and  
give Complaine a miss.

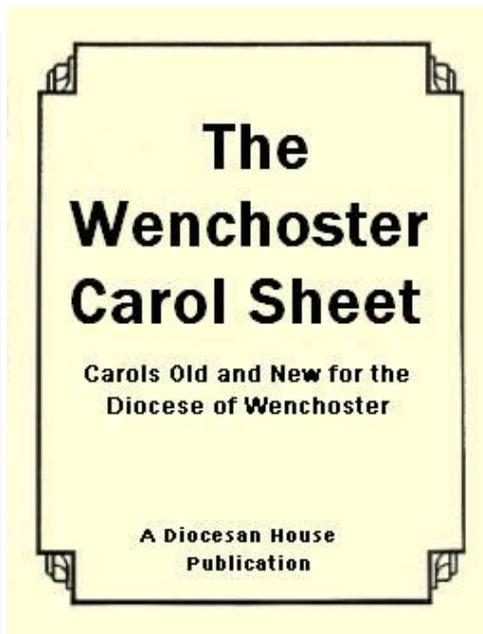
The Choirboys are singing  
their carols so sweet,  
Whilst outside the window,  
snow falls in the street.  
Our ancient cathedral is  
glowing with light,  
And shines like a beacon  
through the depths of the night.

"Another, dear landlord!  
Come fill up my cup,  
With the nutty brown liquid  
that I love to sup!"  
A Wenchester Christmas  
is a time of good cheer,  
If I get all my stuffing,  
and a firkin of beer.

*(Tune: Away in a manger)*

## 3 Bishop holy

Bishop holy.  
Deacon lowly,  
Walking with the choir at night;  
Candles glowing,  
Trousers showing  
'neath the albs all clean and white.  
Bells all ringing,



Trebles singing,  
Incense swinging,  
Eyes all stinging,  
This is Mass on Christmas night.  
This is Mass on Christmas night.

Folks were sleeping,  
Children weeping,  
Thinking Santa wouldn't come;  
Heard the jingle,  
Of Kris Kringle,  
And were then no longer glum.  
In the morning,  
Daylight dawning,  
Priests still yawning,  
Bells are warning,  
There are carols still to hum.  
There are carols still to hum.

*(Tune: Traditional Polish Melody)*

## 4 Father, awake

Father, awake, for now it's Christmas  
morn!  
It is still dark outside, before the dawn.  
Four hours since you came home to rest  
your head;  
One glass of ruby wine and then to bed.  
Sleep after midnight mass was so divine,  
Now you must rise and get to church on  
time.

Six-thirty mass, attended by just two;  
Over in fifteen minutes - good for you!  
Home then to sip some tea and meditate,  
For it's expected that you preach at  
eight.  
Sun has now risen, shining watery rays  
On this most sacred of the winter's days.

Back to the church, and vestments on  
again,  
For there's a choral Eucharist at ten.  
Children galore, all full of Santa's

smiles,  
Waving new toys and playing in the  
aisles.  
Parents attend, with weary, bloodshot  
eyes;  
Thoughts turn to sherry, turkey and  
mince pies.

Home in your chair, a glass of gin is  
poured,  
You can relax and quietly thank the  
Lord,  
For all the given strength of heart and  
mind,  
That has been needed for the Christmas  
grind.  
But when all's said and done this day of  
days,  
It's for the new born King that all must  
praise!

*(Tune: Yorkshire, aka Stockport)*

## 5 Good choristers rejoice

Good choristers rejoice  
and sing your Christmas choice;  
People sit down on the oak  
pews, pews,  
wanting music without croak;  
Four-part scores you love to bring,  
unto Christ our Saviour King;  
Sing you faithful folk!  
Sing you faithful folk!

For tenor, bass combine  
with higher voices fine;  
Trebles, you may pick your art;  
choose, choose;  
some may sing the descant part;  
Counter-tenors add your lilt,  
and the harmony is built.  
Lifting every heart!  
Lifting every heart!

*(Tune: In Dulci Jubilo)*

## 6 God rest you merry, Sacristan

God rest you merry, Sacristan,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
For Mass is said at midnight,  
And not on Christmas Day.  
The Dean is at his mother's  
And our Bishop is away:  
*So put out the candles and the lights,  
Candles and lights,  
So put out the candles and the lights.*

In Wenchester at Christmas  
A festive spirit reigns,  
And deep within the Nine Bells,  
The smell of smoke remains,  
For every year they burn a tree

Till only ash remains:  
*So put out the candles ...*

From out the Bishop's office,  
A Christmas message comes,  
Proclaiming peace and latitude  
To us and all his chums.  
Whilst at our door the new Youth Band  
Play carols on the drums:  
*So put out the candles ...*

But do not fear, this merry tide  
Doth last but a few days;  
And soon we will be able to  
Return to our old ways.  
With wine and women, mirth and song,  
And alcoholic haze;  
*So put out the candles ...*

So whilst it's here, we'll play our part  
And sing those merry tunes;  
And play the silly party games,  
And blow up those balloons;  
And eat the turkey, ham and beef,  
And breakfast on dried prunes;  
*So put out the candles ...*  
*(Tune: God rest ye merry, Gentlemen)*

## 7 I saw three priests

I saw three priests come walking in,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
I saw three priests come walking in,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And who was with those priests all  
three?  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
And who was with those priests all  
three?  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

The servers and the choir were there,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
The servers and the choir were there,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Pray, where then was the Bishop fine?  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
Pray, where then was the Bishop fine?  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

O, he had gone to southern France,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
O, he had gone to southern France,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Then ring the bells in merry glee,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
Then ring the bells in merry glee,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

And let the incense rise up high,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
And let the incense rise up high,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.  
And let the choir sing "Gloria!"  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
And let the choir sing "Gloria!"  
On Christmas Day in the morning.  
*(Tune: Traditional English Melody)*

## 8 In the church each winter

In the church each winter,  
Doors are opened wide.  
Holly, flowers and ivy,  
Decorate inside.  
Choirs have long since practiced  
Carols French and old.  
Candles beckon strangers in  
From the cold.

"Welcome all, it's Christmas,  
Come and spend a while,  
Listening to the music,  
Telling of a child,  
Born this day in Jewry,  
Come to cast out fear.  
No, the story hasn't changed  
Since last year."

Come they, in their dozens,  
Wrapped in fashions rare.  
Masked by mints and perfume,  
Their post-dinner stare.  
Fumbling with the Prayer Book,  
"Do we sit or kneel?"  
Yet they come each year  
So worship can appeal.  
*(Tune: Cranham. IRREGULAR)*

## 9 See amid the rural snow

See amid the rural snow,  
Hands are frozen, cheeks aglow,  
Tramping in from off the land,  
Comes the merry carol band.  
*Every year you sing the same,  
Every year there's one who's lame,  
As you move from place to place,  
Murdering the Christmas grace.*

Lo, within the Nine Bells bar,  
Each can find a foaming jar,  
Filled with ale all gleaming bright,  
Bringing cheer to this cold night.  
*Every year you sing the same,...*

Say, ye wandering minstrels, say,  
Will ye sing in tune today?  
Or will one voice sound quite flat,  
Like a cornered screeching cat?  
*Every year you sing the same,...*

As we listen in the night,  
Lo, we get a nasty fright;  
Voices screech down every lane,  
Sounding like a dog in pain.  
*Every year you sing the same, ...*

In our homes, beside the fire,  
Still we hear this awful choir;  
Lights go out, we sit secure,  
As the knock comes on our door.  
*Every year you sing the same, ...*

"ark the 'erald angels sing"  
Has a quite distinctive ring.  
Every Christmas we all pray  
For the peace of Boxing Day.  
*Every year you sing the same, ...*  
*(Tune: Humility. John Goss)*

## 10 Silent night

Silent night, holy night,  
In the bar all is bright,  
Tinsel dangles from every pump,  
Blow-up Santa makes regulars jump!  
And we party 'til dawn.  
And we party 'til dawn.

Silent night, holy night,  
Locals beam at the sight,  
Hot mulled wine is in every glass,  
Have too many, you fall on your arse,  
And we party 'til dawn.  
And we party 'til dawn.

Silent night, holy night,  
With the hour, comes the light,  
Have a "snowball", it's really quite nice,  
Eggs and lemon, but hold on the ice,  
And we party 'til dawn.  
And we party 'til dawn.

*(Tune: Stille Nacht. Franz Gruber)*

## 11 The Cotta Carol

Put the cottas on the servers,  
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.  
Check their cassocks, don't be nervous.  
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.  
Trim their wicks once you are vested.  
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.  
Yet no more – you'll get arrested.  
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

*(Tune: Deck the Halls. Traditional)*

## 12 The Cottaging Carol

He we come a-cottaging  
Along the country lanes.  
We bang on doors and sip your wine,  
And fall into the drains!

### CHORUS:

Raise a glass, one or two,  
And to you your cottage too!  
May your Christmas be merry,  
And may your head be clear!  
May your Christmas be merry with  
cheer!

First we run to number three,  
There's rumour of a still;  
We shake some hands and sit awhile,  
'Cause John looks rather ill. *(Chorus)*

Next we find the spinsters who  
Keep house beside the stream.  
We use the loo, a gin or two,  
Or Harvey's Bristol Cream. *(Chorus)*

Down the hill we saunter  
To the Rectory so dark.  
We knock and yell, and ring the bell,  
But Father's in the park! *(Chorus)*

Up the High Street, past the church  
Where useful trees abound.  
We water sod with thanks to God,  
For this is holy ground. *(Chorus)*  
*(Tune: The Wassail Song)*

### 13 The Server and the Boat boy

The server and the boat boy  
To choose between the twain,  
Of all the boys that we ever saw,  
The boat boy has the grains.  
*O, the sweetness of the incense,  
Be it Prinknash or Dumont;  
The smoke will swirl on Christmas Eve  
From altar to the font.*

The thurifer's behind him,  
With hand on shoulder slight,  
To guide him towards the Rector  
Who waits to start the rite!  
*O, the sweetness ...*  
*(Tune: Holly and the Ivy Traditional)*

### 14 The Carol of the Feast

Tomorrow shall be my feasting day;  
With slices of goose and a turkey fair  
With trimmings, gravy and bread sauce,  
And chipolatas if I dare.  
*(Refrain)*  
*Sing, more! Yes please!  
More, yes please, yes please!  
I'll take some more, with carrots and  
peas*

No sermons to write, no people to see;  
No masses to celebrate, incense to  
swing,

Just food and gifts and ruby port wine,  
Preceded possibly by some gin.  
*(Refrain)*

I'll push back the chair at five minutes to  
three,  
And slowly digest the plum pudding  
supreme;  
I'll hold a glass of Calvados cheer,  
And watch the message from the Queen.  
*(Refrain)*

*(Tune: Traditional English)*

### 15 Rejoice and be merry

Rejoice and be merry  
in choir and in nave,  
For this is the season  
to spend, not to save!  
And so to the markets  
and stores we shall run,  
To spend all our wages  
until we are done.

We sing about angels  
who told of a birth  
To shepherds relaxing  
with wine and with mirth,  
And we to shall sing  
of that glorious day,  
And echo the chorus  
with a hearty "Wa-hay!"

The cloisters are lit  
with a flickering flame,  
The chancel and chantry  
are likewise the same,  
And over the scent  
of the beeswax so nice,  
Arises the glories of  
wine mixed with spice.

Nine lessons and Carols  
are heard through the land,  
And after, refreshments  
are placed in the hand,  
A pie made with fruits  
in a mixture so sweet,  
All served on a napkin  
that keeps it quite neat.

Good wishes are given  
to each at the door,  
Though few of the people  
will come any more;  
Behind in the pews  
are left leaflets and crumbs,  
And home goes the vicar  
who merrily hums.  
*(To the tune of "Rejoice and be merry")*

### 16 What choir is this

What choir is this that sings so sweet  
Along the city's roads so dim?  
Who light the way with candles bright,  
Chanting the Yuletide hymn.  
These, these are all the boys,  
Who put away their childish toys:  
Wearing their robes so gay,  
They sing the Christmas story.

Why leave your beds so warm and snug,  
To tread the cold and darkened street?  
In cassock red and whitened ruff,  
And buckles on your feet.  
Morning Prayer and Evensong,  
Are sung each day the whole year long;  
This night makes quite a change,  
They sing the Christmas story.

So bring them wine that's spiced and  
hot,  
And mincemeat pies in shortened crust,  
And place a coin into the tin,  
To show you're worthy of trust.  
They'll sing the song on high,  
A four-part choral lullaby;  
In perfect harmony,  
They sing the Christmas story.  
*(Tune: Greensleaves)*

### 17 Carol of the Gifts

Come, thou long expected presents!  
On your shelves for me to see!  
Santa's here, it's time for shopping,  
Please reveal yourself to me.

Christmas? No - such sentimental  
Thoughts of seasons must decrease.  
This is now a time for selling,  
So our profits can increase.

Tie it in with things like Kwanza,  
Hannakah, all things with lights.  
Snowmen, tinsel, ice-clad grottoes  
Must become the High Street sights.

Sound our music, worship snowbells,  
Let the children dance and play.  
Let's forget the Church's season,  
In our retail holiday!

*(Tune: Cross of Jesus, John Stainer)*



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