

Ode for Christmas Day

Ewan Clark (From *A Collection of Miscellaneous Poems*, published Whitehaven 1779)
(Adapted by Ian Wright 2022)

Hark! Celestial voices sing
'This day is born the heav'nly king,
Redeemer of man's sinful race!
Oh, What a wonderful grace!
Join, ye lands, the joyful lay
With adoration hail the day:
In excelsis gloria!
In excelsis gloria!

No blazon'd dome, no downy bed,
Protects the heav'n-sprung stranger's head.
No pompous pageants his birth proclaim,
But ever hallowed is his name!
A humble manger is th'abode
Of Christ, the living son of God.
In excelsis gloria!
In excelsis gloria!

Heavenly hosts, in bright array,
Still annual hail this holy day.
In God's courts sing countless throngs
And fill the heav'ns with angelic songs.
On golden harps each hand essays
To sing the sweet Messiah's praise:
In excelsis gloria!
In excelsis gloria!

Shall we then, mere clods of clay,
Keep silent on this solemn day,
While angels and archangels bring
Their praises to our Saviour King?
Forbid it, Lord! but we should try
To aid heav'n's concert in the sky:
In excelsis gloria!
In excelsis gloria!