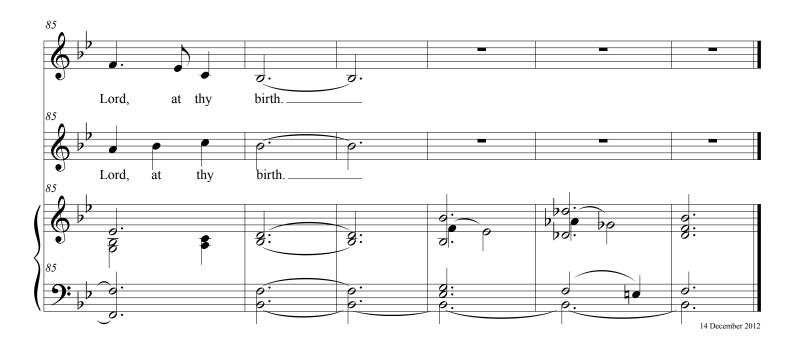
Silent Night











Historical notes:

This song was first performed on Christmas Eve 1818 at St Nicholas parish church in Oberndorf bei Salzburg. The small town on the Salzach river, part of the former Archbishopric of Salzburg, had just passed to Austria in 1816. The young priest Father Joseph Mohr had come to Oberndorf the year before, having already written the lyrics of the song "Stille Nacht" in 1816 at Mariapfarr, the hometown of his father in the Salzburg Lungau region where Joseph had served as a parochial vicar.

Before Christmas Eve, Mohr brought the words to Franz Xaver Gruber, schoolmaster and organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf, and asked him to compose a melody and guitar accompaniment for the church service. Both performed the carol during the mass on the night of December 24.

In his written account regarding the composition of this carol, Gruber gives no mention of the specific inspiration for creating the song. According to the song's history provided by Austria's *Silent Night Society*, one story is that the church organ was no longer working, so that Mohr and Gruber therefore created a song for accompaniment by guitar alone. *Silent Night* historian Renate Ebeling-Winkler Berenguer says that the first mention of a broken organ was in a book published in the United States in *The Story of Silent Night* (1965) by John Travers Moore.