

Christmas 2011 St Michael's Studio City

And the angels sang, "Glory to God and Peace."

The great archangel carefully folded her wings so as not to fluster the young angel next to her. The youngster moved uncertainly and seemed a bit lost. Gabriel understood then that this was one created late in eternity, which, while not being the same as being created late in time, endowed the new one with much of the same indefiniteness. Gabriel, remembering her own childhood in eternity, called the little one to herself.

"What is your name, child?" she asked kindly.

The other fidgeted, well aware that he was in the presence of one of heaven's greatest. "Cherubini," came the hesitant reply.

"Ah, Cherubini," lilted the Archangel, "what a lovely name. How are you doing, child?"

The little angel took visible courage from the evident kindness of God's lieutenant and sighed, "Confused, to be perfectly honest."

Gabriel nodded understandingly. "Yes, it all must seem daunting. Actually, you've come in on the last act of the drama. We've just finished the last chorus."

"Oh," said the diminutive one in a disappointed tone.

The wise archangel, having all the time in eternity, thought for a moment and then said, "Would you like to see what the Lord has done? I could show you what the drama has been, since every moment of time remains forever within the eternity of our God."

The small singer nodded eagerly and with unconscious boldness born of trust nestled close to Gabriel's side, just under the comforting lee of her white wing. He turned eagerly to the place in the clouds that the archangel pointed to.

"There, little one, that is how it all began," crooned the majestic spirit.

At first the little one saw only velvet darkness, lovely in its own fashion, different from the fullness that he was used to. Soon, the beautiful blackness echoed with fluting voices of newly-made angels and archangels laughing in unimaginable pleasure of just being and knowing and loving. Then the darkness exploded in a cascade of light almost painful to behold, and in a dizzying succession, the angel saw come to be a vast expanse of interstellar space, brilliant suns and stars, majestic galaxies, moons, a fragile sapphire-blue planet with emerald highlights, populated with reindeers and roses and platypuses and neutrons and bamboo and granite and... -- the catalog of wonders was endless. And from the primal elements he saw God create beings of surpassing beauty, like the earlier creatures and yet blessed with memory, reason, and skill -- spirits similar to the Divine Creating Spirit who breathed life into them. These humans, as God named them, seemed to be special favorites of the Divine Master, for the angel saw a transcendent smile crease the face of God, a smile very like the one that greeted the creation of his own angelic kind.

And the angelic youngster noticed that the angels sang, "Glory to God and Peace."

He was almost speechless with the beauty and variety of what he saw. "Now I understand," he murmured.

"Oh no," said Gabriel, "this is just the beginning. See now what follows."

Cherubini looked once more and, as the curtaining clouds parted, saw a young woman touch her swollen belly anxiously. (Gabriel whispered sotto voce to the puzzled little one, "That is how these humans make more of themselves; with love they take part of themselves and grow it into a new creature. Very different from how God makes new angels," said the archangel in quiet awe.) The young woman was sitting on a small animal in the dark of a narrow street. Cherubini could sense her troubled concerns: the birth of her child was imminent, she was far from home with only her husband alongside her, there seemed to be no place for her, she was poor and vulnerable, the future seemed uncertain, and she was surrounded by a world of envy, anger, selfishness, loneliness, sickness, hatred, and death.

The little angel questioned the grand archangel, "But what are these things, this loneliness, this hatred, this death?" He shrank back within the protecting shadow of Gabriel's wing.

Sadly, the great one replied, "These are terrible, alien realities that these humans have brought into their world. They are why we are looking at this scene. This is how God deals with the hurting of His creation."

Cherubini looked once more and now saw the young woman in a rude hut, her husband nearby, one lone lamp shedding a pale reflection of creation's light. Now her anxiety was muted and suffused by a wondrous joy. In her arms she protected her child. Sensing movement and music, the innocent angel saw his own kind, millions of angels and archangels, kneeling in awe and wonder around the mother and child and millions more dancing through the night sky that now seemed far less alien and foreboding.

The angelic youngster noticed that the angels sang, "Glory to God and Peace."

"But what does this mean?" his soft voice queried the loving spirit next to him.

She replied, "Look again, Cherubini, what do you perceive?"

The inexperienced spirit once more took in the scene and, with a sudden shift in perspective, felt a familiar presence in the scene. "Why..., why..., God Himself is there." he gasped. "God is with that Baby,... no, God is in that Baby."

Gabriel smiled her approval. "Now you see the power of our God's love. He has done what none of us could ever have conceived. In this human Baby, He made Himself one with us, His creation, with all that He has made and is making. This Baby is why we are so close to our God."

Cherubini fidgeted uneasily. "But, that Baby is going to die," said the immortal angel, struggling with a reality that he would never know. "I can sense death in His future, a terrible death."

"Yes," replied Gabriel, "that is part of what God is doing. God found a way to die, to experience everything that His human children must endure. It is how he is repairing their world, and it is how He is close to us."

The little heir of grace struggled to comprehend. He was stunned by the passionate love the modest scene implied. He still heard echoing faintly, but as ever-present as the Baby's heartbeat, the angels' chant, "Glory to God and Peace."

Cherubini turned to the wiser spirit, questioning, "But, what happened? I've missed it all. You said that it is all finished now. How did it end up? Tell me, Gabriel, what did the Baby accomplish?"

God's noble, archangelic messenger rose from her seat, holding the little one close to her, took flight, and eventually came to rest on a prominence that on the earthly ball would have been a mountain. Smiling radiantly, she pointed in front of her. Cherubini sucked in his breath and then forgot to breathe. Stretching out before them in a vast panorama was a beautiful world much like the best of what Cherubini had seen in the visions. There was also a great city, of unspeakable comeliness. Throughout this unlimited scene moved a great cloud of people of every type and description. They were talking and singing and dancing and laughing. Each seemed to be intensely interested in every person around him. Cherubini was struck by the difference between the people of this scene and those revealed to him before. Here were no frowns, no bent bodies, no harsh voices, no salty tears. No one was left out, but every single person was included in a warm belonging. There were no outcasts.

Gabriel said to Cherubini, "This is what the Baby accomplished. It is a new heaven and a new earth. God has wiped away every tear. People bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

Cherubini was stunned by the beauty and variety of what he saw. And the angelic youngster noticed that the angels still sang, "Glory to God and Peace." Now they were joined by other voices, different than the angelic, but captivating in their own way, the voices of humanity – men, women, and children – also singing, Glory to God and Peace."