**N. TOWN PLAYS 2025, AUDITION PIECE 2: BISHOP, MARY**

BISHOP Listen, lordings, both high and low,

 and take good heed what I shall say.

 Be obedient your bishop to know,

 for I am that lord that made this law.

 With hearts benign hearken now:

your damsels to wedding look that ye draw

that pass fourteen years, for that ye owe,

the law of God biddeth you so:

that at fourteen years of age

every damsel, what so she be,

to the increase of more plenty,

should be brought in good degree

unto her spousage.

 Now, Mary, child, to the law thou list,

 and choose thee a spouse to thy fellow –

 the Law thou must fulfil.

MARY Against the law will I never be,

 but man’s fellowship shall never follow me.

 I will live ever in chastity

 by the grace of God’s will.

BISHOP Ah, fair child, why sayest thou so?

 What meaneth thee for to live chaste?

The cause thou tell me, and that in haste!

Why wilt thou not to wedding go?

MARY My father and my mother also,

 because they had for fruit no child,

 they came to the temple at the last,

 to do their sacrifice.

 Then God, full of grace,

 hath sent them both seed and flower.

 When I was born in their bower,

 to the temple offered I was.

 When that I was to the temple brought,

 and offered up to God above,

 there I avowed, as my heart thought,

 to serve my God with heartly love.

 Cleanness and chastity my heart move.

 In the service of God will I ever dwell.

 In no wise should ye reprove

such clean life, as I you tell.

BISHOP Ah, mercy, God, these words wise

 of this fair maiden clean,

 they trouble my heart in many wise.

 Her wit is great, as ye may see.

 To live ever in chastity,

abiding therein in God’s name,

for such a vow, verily,

 no man can her reprove or blame

 Yet to observe our law also is needful:

 that such maidens should wedded be.

In this to discern, to me is dreadful!

 Together to God now pray we

 that it may please his infinite deity

 knowledge in this to send us.

 Meekly each one fall down on knee,

 and we shall begin ‘Veni Creator Spiritus’