



LOURDES LEAFLET

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Issue 81

The O Antiphons



The O Antiphons refer to the seven antiphons that cover the special period of Advent preparation known as the Octave before Christmas, December 17-23. They are recited (or chanted) preceding the Magnificat during Vespers of the Liturgy of the Hours.

The importance of O Antiphons is twofold: Each one highlights a title for the Messiah: *O Sapientia* (O Wisdom), *O Adonai* (O Lord), *O Radix Jesse* (O Root of Jesse), *O Clavis David* (O Key of David), *O Oriens* (O Dayspring), *O Rex Gentium* (O King of the Nations), and *O Emmanuel*.

Each one also refers to the prophecy of Isaiah of the coming of the Messiah.

The O Antiphons have been part of our liturgical tradition since the very early Church. The first letters of the titles taken backwards form a Latin acrostic of "Ero Cras" which translates to "Tomorrow, I will come", mirroring the theme of the antiphons. The hymn *O come, O come, Emmanuel* (in Latin, *Veni Emmanuel*) is a lyrical paraphrase of these antiphons.

In these last days of Advent, please consider taking some quite time to read the scripture verses and meditate on the coming of Christ into our homes, our families, our workplaces, and our communities.



December 17: *O Sapientia (O Wisdom)*

*O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,
reaching from one end to the other mightily,
and sweetly ordering all things:
Come and teach us the way of prudence.*

Isaiah 11:2-3; 28:29 Sirach 24:3 Wisdom of Solomon 1:7; 8:1; 9:1, 9-11 Proverbs 2:6, 9-11 John 1:1-5

Isaiah had prophesied, "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord, and Wonderful is His counsel and great is His wisdom."

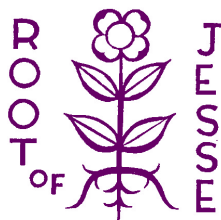


December 18: *O Adonai (O Lord)*

*O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel,
who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush
and gave him the law on Sinai:
Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.*

Exodus 3:2, 4, 6; 20:1-2; 24:12 Isaiah 11:4-5; 33:22; 52:10 Micah 6:4 Acts 7:30-31

Isaiah had prophesied, "But He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the lands afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips; and Indeed the Lord will be there with us, majestic; yes the Lord our judge, the Lord our lawgiver, the Lord our king, he it is who will save us."



December 19: *O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse)*

*O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples;
before you kings will shut their mouths,
to you the nations will make their prayer:
Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.*

Isaiah 11:1-4, 10-11; 45:14; 52:13, 15 Micah 5:2 Romans 15:12

Isaiah had prophesied, "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom, and on that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, the Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious." Remember also that Jesse was the father of King David, and Micah had prophesied that the Messiah would be of the house and lineage of David and be born in David's city, Bethlehem.



December 20: O Clavis David (O Key of David)

*O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel
you open and no one can shut;
you shut and no one can open:*

*Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house,
those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.*

Isaiah 9:7; 22:22; 42:6-7 Numbers 24:17a Psalm 107:13-14

Isaiah had prophesied, "I will place the Key of the House of David on His shoulder; when he opens, no one will shut, when he shuts, no one will open, and His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over His kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever."



December 21: O Oriens (O Dayspring)

*O Morning Star,
splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness:
Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death.*

Isaiah 9:2; 60:1-2, 19-20 Wisdom 7:26 Malachi 4:2 Luke 1:76-79 John 8:12 Revelation 22:16

Isaiah had prophesied, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shown."



December 22: O Rex Gentium (O King of the nations)

*O King of the nations, and their desire,
the cornerstone making both one:
Come and save the human race,
which you fashioned from clay.*

Isaiah 2:4; 9:6; 28:16 Jeremiah 10:7 Job 33:1, 6 1 Peter 2:4-6 Ephesians 2:14

Isaiah had prophesied, "For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again."

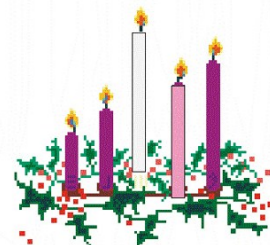


December 23: O Emmanuel (O God is with Us)

*O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver,
the hope of the nations and their Saviour:
Come and save us, O Lord our God*

Isaiah 7:14; 33:22 Matthew 1:20-24 James 4:12

Isaiah had prophesied, "The Lord himself will give you this sign: the Virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel."



O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
The virgin will give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el And ran - som cap - tive
2. O come, Thou Day - spring, come and cheer Our spir - its by Thine
3. O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high And or - der all things,
4. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind All peo - ples in one

