

The “O Antiphons” of Advent

The Church has been singing the “O Antiphons” since at least the eighth century. These antiphons introduce the Magnificat, or Canticle of Mary, at Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours, from December 17th through December 23rd. Each of them begins with a traditional title for Christ. Each of these traditional titles for the Messiah connects the coming of Christ with the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. The chant, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” is a paraphrase of these “O Antiphons.” A chanted verse for each day is on the right side of the page.

*Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel*

December 17

O Wisdom of our God Most High,
guiding creation with power and love:
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who orders all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in her ways to go.

December 18

O Leader of the House of Israel,
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:
come to rescue us with your mighty power!

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.

December 19

O Root of Jesse's stem,
sign of God's love for all his people:
come to save us without delay!

O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,
from ev'ry foe deliver them
that trust your mighty pow'r to save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

December 20

O Key of David,
opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom:
come and free the prisoners of darkness!

O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

December 21

O Radiant Dawn,
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
come and shine on those who dwell in darkness
and in the shadow of death.

O come, O Dayspring from on high
and cheer us by your drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight.

December 22

O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:
come and save man, whom you formed from the dust!

O come, Desire of nations, bind
in one the hearts of humankind;
O bid our sad divisions cease,
and be for us our King of Peace.

December 23

O Emmanuel, our King and Giver of Law:
come to save us, Lord our God!

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.