

PRAYING the O ANTIPHONS



**We remember that as we await the anniversary of the birth of Lord, we realize that our God is with us and gives us life and breath and calls us to a deeper relationship with Him.
Holy is God; Holy and mighty; Holy and immortal.**

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 Rising Sun), *O Rex Gentium* (O King of the Nations), and *O Emmanuel*. Also, each one refers to the prophecy of Isaiah of the coming of the Messiah.

The O antiphons are prayed each evening from December 17 – 23 during the Office of Vespers. We suggest it can be prayed anytime each of those days along with the Magnificat or Mary’s Song of Praise.



December 17

***O Sapientia:* “O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care. Come and show your people the way to salvation.” 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.” (11:2-3), and “Wonderful is His counsel and great is His wisdom.” (28:29).**



December 18

***O Adonai:* “O sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.” Isaiah had prophesied, “But He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land’s 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.” (11:4-5); 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.” (33:22).**

December 19

O Radix Jesse: “O Flower of Jesse’s stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.” Isaiah had prophesied, “But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom.” (11:1), 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.” (11:10). 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 (Micah 5:1).

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December 20

O Clavis David: “O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of Heaven: Come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom.” 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.” (22:22), 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.” (9:6).

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December 21

O Oriens: “O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.” 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.” (9:1).

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December 22

O Rex Gentium: “O King of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart; O Keystone of the mighty arch of man, come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust.” 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.” (9:5), and “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.” (2:4).

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December 23

O Emmanuel: “O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God.” 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.”

(7:14). Remember “Emmanuel” means “God is with us.”

The Benedictine monks arranged these antiphons with a definite purpose. If one starts with the last title and takes the first letter of each one – Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia – the Latin words ero cras are formed, meaning, “Tomorrow, I will come.” Therefore, the Lord Jesus, whose coming we have prepared for in Advent and whom we have addressed in these seven Messianic titles, now speaks to us, “Tomorrow, I will come.” So the “O Antiphons” not only bring intensity to our Advent preparation, but also bring it to a joyful conclusion.

**THE MAGNIFICAT
MARY’S SONG of PRAISE**

**My soul praises the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God Who loves me.
For this God Who is, has done great things for me.
My heart and my body give life to the world.
My spirit, courageous, gives meaning to hope.
The God Who is tender lives deep in my heart,
holds close the children, my gift to creation;
fills friends who hunger with goodness and peace.
The God Who is mercy forgives when I fall,
welcomes my efforts,
heals deepest pain.
The God Who is promise, gives life to my word;
gives glory to my life, the life of the world.
My name is called blessed on the lips of all ages.
Holy is God’s gift.
Holy is God’s name.
Carmelites of Indianapolis**



**Behold a virgin bearing Him
Who comes to save us from our sin;
The prophets cry; Prepare His way”
Make straight His paths to Christmas Day.
Behold our Hope and Life and Light,
The Promise of the holy night;
We lift our prayer and bend our knee
To His great love and majesty.**



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
rejoice with us as we recall the coming of our Lord and Savior.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!