



# Antiphons

## December 17

**O SAPIENTIA:** On this day, the O Antiphons begin to be used with the Song of Mary (the Magnificat) in the liturgy of the Hours for Evening Prayer. The first addresses Jesus by the title *Wisdom*. Christian tradition identifies the figure of Wisdom in the Old Testament with the Second Person of the Trinity. See Proverbs 8 (esp. v.22-31) concerning the role of Wisdom in creation. In its Christian interpretations, Baruch 3:38 also links Wisdom with the Incarnation.

## December 19

**O RADIX JESSE:** Today's O Antiphon calls upon Jesus as the *root of Jesse*, prophesied in Isaiah 11, a passage popular in Advent and in celebrations of Confirmation. The English text used in the Liturgy of the Hours is "flower of Jesse's stem." The English text alludes to the latter part of Isaiah 11:1.

## December 21

**O ORIENS:** Singers of today's O Antiphon in Latin relish this opening phrase. Musically, it has the biggest O of all the antiphons. It applies the image of the *the rising sun*, "the Day Spring," to the coming of the Savior. On the darkest day of the year, it calls for the sun to shine with the light of life, a light strong enough to pierce the grave.

## December 23

**O EMMANUEL:** On the last Evening Prayer of Advent, the O Antiphons conclude with the great title of Jesus: Emmanuel, *God with us*. It sums up the theme of Matthew's Gospel: Jesus is called by this name at the beginning and promises to "be with his followers always, at the end." The popular hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" strikes a note of mourning and exile, but the O Antiphon is triumphant, calling Jesus "Savior of all people."

## December 18

**O ADONAI:** Adonai, a sacred title for the ineffable name of God, translates more commonly into English as *Lord*. When the O Antiphon assigns this title to the coming of Christ, it proclaims the Incarnation. The God revealed in the burning bush and on Mount Sinai comes in human form.

## December 20

**O CLAVIS DAVID:** The one who holds the key of David (Isaiah 22:22, Revelation 3:7) opens and closes with absolute authority. Today's O Antiphon salutes Christ as the *Key of David*, the personification of authority, and the one whose judgment we both fear and welcome.

## December 22

**O REX GENTIUM:** Today's O Antiphon calls Christ by the name *King of nations*. The second appellation, "Keystone of the mighty arch" of human kind, also emphasizes the universal scope of Christ's reign.

## O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

Acc #389 / CPC2 #213

VENI, VENI EMMANUEL

Verses

(Dec. 23) 1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And  
 (Dec. 17) 2. O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who  
 (Dec. 18) 3. O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who  
 (Dec. 19) 4. O come, Thou Rod of Jes - se's stem, From  
 (Dec. 20) 5. O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And  
 (Dec. 21) 6. O come, Thou Day-spring from on high And  
 (Dec. 22) 7. O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind In

1. ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in  
 2. or - d'rest all things might - i - ly; To us the  
 3. to thy tribes on Si - nai's height In an - cient  
 4. ev - 'ry foe de - liv - er them That trust thy  
 5. o - pen wide our heav - 'nly home; Make safe the  
 6. cheer us by thy draw - ing nigh; Dis - perse the  
 7. one the hearts of all hu - man - kind; Bid thou our

1. lone - ly ex - ile here Un - til the Son of  
 2. path of knowl - edge show, And teach us in her  
 3. times didst give the law, In cloud and maj - es -  
 4. might - y pow'r to save, And give them vic - t'ry  
 5. way that leads on high, And close the path to  
 6. gloom - y clouds of night, And death's dark shad - ow  
 7. sad di - vi - sions cease, And be thy - self our

Refrain

1. God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u -  
 2. ways to go.  
 3. ty and awe.  
 4. o'er the grave.  
 5. mis - er - y.  
 6. put to flight.  
 7. Prince of Peace.

el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Text: LM with refrain; Latin, 9th cent.; verses 1, 3-6, para. in *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Cologne, 1710;  
 tr. by John Mason Neale, 1818-1866; verses 2, 7 tr. fr. *The Hymnal* 1940, alt.

Music: *Processionale*, 15th cent. French; adapt. by Thomas Helmore, 1811-1890; Chant, Mode I.

ADVENT