



O ANTIPHONS

Christmas carols, Advent wreaths, Christmas trees, Midnight Mass, and ginger cookies - Whether they are family or Church customs, the many traditions associated with the Advent and Christmas seasons make these special times of the year for us.

One of these ancient traditions is the O Antiphons: seven responses, or antiphons, that are sung or recited to introduce the canticle of Mary (the Magnificat) at evening prayer from December 17 to December 23, the octave before Christmas. These antiphons are based on Isaiah's prophecies and refer to the different ancient titles given to the Messiah:

- O Sapientia (O Wisdom) See *Isaiah* 11:2-3; 28:29
- O Adonai (O Lord) See *Isaiah* 11:4-5; 33:22
- O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse) See *Isaiah* 1:1; 11:10
- O Clavis David (O Key of David) See *Isaiah* 9:6; 22:22
- O Oriens (O Rising Sun) See *Isaiah* 9:1
- O Rex Gentium (O King of the Nations) See *Isaiah* 9:5; 2:4
- O Emmanuel (God with us) See *Isaiah* 7:14

We can bring these responses into our own prayers, as simple reminders throughout the day of the one whose coming we are joyfully expecting, as introductions to our own prayers of praise of Jesus, or as words of thanksgiving for God's faithfulness throughout the ages and our lives. Regardless of how you incorporate these ancient words into your Advent prayer life, let them speak to you, and maybe they will become part of your family traditions.