

Praying the Great “O” Antiphons of Advent

The seven “O” Antiphons of Advent are ancient prayers (8th century) prayed throughout the world from Dec. 17–24. Each petition focuses on a biblical title given to Christ and asks Him to come and fulfill a scriptural promise or prophecy.

An “antiphon” is a verse that is spoken before and again after (sometimes even at some point during) a Psalm or New Testament Song.

These Great “O” Antiphons may be prayed on the appropriate days immediately before and again repeated after the Song of Zechariah (the “Benedictus” found in Luke 1:68-79), often sung or recited in the morning, and the Song of Mary (the “Magnificat” found in Luke 1:46b-55), often sung or recited in the evening. Additionally they may be prayed before and after the Psalm for the day, or simply as additional prayers as your devotion suggests.

The seven stanzas of the hymn, “Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel” (Lutheran Worship #31) were patterned after these prayers and may be used as well.

December 17

O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation, mightily ordering all things:

**Come and teach us
the way of prudence.**

December 18

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

December 19

O Root of Jesse, standing as an ensign before the peoples, before whom all kings are mute, to whom the nations will do homage:
Come quickly to deliver us.

December 20

O Key of David and scepter of the house of Israel, You open and no one can close, You close and no one can open:
**Come and rescue the prisoners
who are in darkness
and in the shadow of death.**

December 21

O Dayspring, splendor of light everlasting:
**Come and enlighten
those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death.**

December 22

O King of the nations, the ruler they long for, the cornerstone uniting all people:
**Come and save us all,
whom You formed out of clay.**

December 23

O Emmanuel, our King and our Lord, the anointed for the nations and their Savior:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.