

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS PRAYERS

1. St. Andrew Novena Prayer

[Recite 15X a day, From Nov. 30 or 1st Sunday of Advent for 15 days. Then, 5X daily, till Feb. 2.]

THIS DEVOTION, also known as the Christmas Anticipation Prayer, starts on the feast day of St Andrew the Apostle, November 30, and ends on Christmas Eve or February 2, depending on the region. Its exact origin is unknown, but it is believed to have begun in Ireland during the 19th century. This is a very meditative prayer that brings about graces, increases our awareness of the real focus of Christmas and prepares us spiritually for His coming.



THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

HAIL AND BLESSED be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight in Bethlehem, in piercing cold.

AT THAT HOUR, vouchsafe O My God, to hear our prayers and grant our petitions, through the merits of Our Saviour Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother. Amen.

IMPRIMATUR: † Michael Augustine, Archbishop of New York, NY, February 6, 1897

2. Advent Psalms and Prayers

ADVENT HYMN

VENI, veni Emmanuel! Captivum solve Israel,
Qui gemit in exilio, privatus Dei Filio.

Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel! Nascetur pro te, Israel.

O COME, O come, Emmanuel! And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God
appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come thee, O Israel.

“Drop down dew from above, ye heavens, and let the clouds rain the Just One; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Savior.” (Isa. 14:8)

R. Come, let us adore our Lord and King, Who is about to come to us! (Repeat together after each prophecy or verse.)

FIRST WEEK

REJOICE, O daughter of Sion, and be jubilantly glad, O daughter of Israel. Behold, thy Lord cometh, and in His day a great light shall arise; the mountains shall drop down sweetness and the hills shall flow with milk and honey, for the Great Prophet shall come and He shall renew Jerusalem.

BEHOLD, thy God cometh, the Man of the House of David, to sit upon the throne; and you shall see, and your heart shall rejoice. (Roman Breviary)

R. Come, let us adore our Lord and King, Who is about to come to us!

Let us pray



O Lord, stir up Thy power, we beg Thee, and come, that by Thy protection we may deserve to be rescued from the threatening dangers of our sins and be saved by Thy deliverance. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

SECOND WEEK

BEHOLD, the Lord, our Protector, cometh, the Holy One of Israel, having on His head the regal crown, and He shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. (Apoc. 14:14; Ps. 71:8)

R. Come, let us adore our Lord and King, Who is about to come to us!

BEHOLD, the Lord cometh, and He will not lie; should He tarry, await Him; for He shall assuredly come and shall not delay. (Rom. Brev.)

R. Come, let us adore our Lord and King, Who is about to come to us!

Let us pray

O Lord, stir up our hearts that we may prepare the ways of Thine only begotten Son, that through His coming we may be made worthy to serve Thee with purified minds. Through Christ our Lord. **R. Amen.**

THIRD WEEK

THE LORD shall come down as rain upon the fleece, and in His days shall justice spring up and abundance of peace; and all kings of the earth shall adore Him, all nations serve Him. (Ps. 51:6-7,11)

R. Come, let us adore our Lord and King, Who is about to come to us!

A CHILD is born to us, and He shall be called the Mighty God; He shall sit upon the throne of David, His Father, and shall rule; for the government is upon His shoulders. (Isa. 9:6)

R. Come, let us adore our Lord and King, Who is about to come to us!

Let us pray

O Lord, we beseech Thee, incline Thine ear to our prayers and enlighten the darkness of our minds by the grace of Thy visitation. Through Christ our Lord. **R. Amen.**

FOURTH WEEK

BETHLEHEM, city of the most high God, out of thee shall go forth the Ruler of Israel, and His proceeding is from the beginning, even from the days of eternity; and He shall be exalted in the midst of the whole earth, and peace shall hold sway in the day of His coming. (Mich. 5:2)

R. Come, let us adore our Lord and King, Who is about to come to us!

OUR LORD JESUS, the Lamb undefiled, has entered the Holy of Holies for us, having become a High Priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech... He is the King of Justice... having neither beginning of days, nor end of life. (Heb. 6:20)

R. Come, let us adore our Lord and King, Who is about to come to us!

Let us pray

O Lord, we beseech Thee, stir up Thy power and come; and with great might deliver us, that with the help of Thy grace, Thy merciful forgiveness may hasten what our sins impede. Through Christ our Lord. **R. Amen.**

DAILY ADVENT PRAYER

ETERNAL FATHER, in the wilderness of the Jordan Thou didst send a messenger to prepare people's hearts for the coming of Thy Son. Help me to hear his words and repent of my sins, so that I may clearly see the way to walk, the truth to speak, and the life to live for Him, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (<https://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=351>)

O INFANT SAVIOR, grant us the grace to imitate Your humility and charity as Thou has shown by coming to us in the humble manger, surrounded by the penurious environment of a cave in Bethlehem. Thou immediately sufferest for us in that cave. From hereon, we will always give Thee thanks for that initial severe inconvenience.

O MARY, OUR MOTHER, be our model during this holy season and all the seasons of our lives. Thou didst endure rejection from the inn and the inconvenience and chill of the Bethlehem cave. Still this was just the beginning of the sorrows thou hast to bear as our co-Redemptrix. Your joy of delivering Jesus is coupled by the anxiety of that day when He becomes the Holocaust that will open the gates of Heaven. Dearest Mother, pray for us always that God's will is also our meat as it is with Jesus and with thee.

O ST. JOSEPH, pray for us that we may receive the graces of humility and docility to God's will that thou hast shown as the guardian of Jesus and our Blessed Mother. Amen.



TO JESUS LIVING IN MARY

O JESUS living in Mary, come and live in Thy servants,
In the spirit of Thy holiness, in the fullness of Thy might,
In the truth of Thy virtues, in the perfection of Thy ways,
In the communion of Thy mysteries.
Subdue every hostile power in Thy Spirit,
For the glory of the Father. Amen.

Second verse of 'O Come, Emmanuel'

O COME THOU Rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of Hell thy people save, and give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

VENI, O JESSE Virgula! Ex hostis tuos ungula, De specu tuos tartari, educ,
et antro barathri.

Gaude, gaude, Emmanuel! Nascetur pro te, Israel.

3. Christmas Novena in Honor of The Child Jesus

[Begins on December 16. Recite all the following prayers for nine (9) consecutive days, finishing on Christmas Eve, December 24.]

1. Eternal Father, I offer to Thee honor and glory, for my eternal salvation and for the salvation of the whole world, the mystery of the birth of our Divine Redeemer. *Gloria...*

2. Eternal Father, I offer to Thee honor and glory, and for my eternal salvation and that of the whole world, the sufferings of the most holy Virgin Mary and St. Joseph on that long and weary journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem and the anguish of their hearts at not finding a place of shelter when Thy Beloved Son, the Savior of the world, was about to be born. *Gloria...*



3. Eternal Father, I offer to Thee honor and glory, and for my eternal salvation and that of the whole world, the sufferings of Jesus in the manger where He was born, the cold He suffered, the tears He shed and His tender infant cries. *Gloria...*

4. Eternal Father, I offer to Thee honor and glory, and for my eternal salvation and that of the whole world, the pain which the Divine Child Jesus felt in His tender Body when He submitted to the rite of circumcision: I offer Thee that Precious Blood which He then first shed for the salvation of all mankind. *Gloria...*

5. Eternal Father, I offer to Thee honor and glory, and for my eternal salvation and that of the whole world, the humility, mortification, patience, charity and all the virtues of the Child Jesus; I thank Thee, I love Thee, and I bless Thee tenderly for this ineffable mystery of the

Incarnation of Thy Divine Word. *Gloria...*

V. And the Word was made Flesh, **R.** And dwelt among us.

Let us Pray

O God, Whose Only-Begotten Son has appeared in the substance of our flesh; grant, we beseech Thee, that through Him, Whom we acknowledge to have been outwardly like us, we may deserve to be renewed in our inward selves. Who lives and reigns with Thee in unity with the Holy Ghost, One God, for ever and ever. Amen.

4. The “O” Antiphons

THE ‘O’ ANTIPHONS (also known as the Great Advent Antiphons or Great O’s) are Magnificat antiphons used at vespers on the last seven days of Advent in Western Christian traditions. They likely date to sixth-century Italy, when Boethius refers to the text in *The Consolation of Philosophy*. They subsequently became one of the key musical features of the days leading up to Christmas. The texts are best known in the English-speaking world in their paraphrased form in the hymn ‘O Come, O Come, Emmanuel’.

SEQUENCE

Each text, in the original Latin, begins with the vocative particle “O”. Each antiphon is a name of Christ, one of His attributes mentioned in Scripture. They are:

17 December: O *Sapientia* (O Wisdom)

18 December: O *Adonai* (O Lord)

19 December: O *Radix Jesse* (O Root of Jesse)

20 December: O *Clavis David* (O Key of David)

21 December: O *Oriens* (O Dayspring)

22 December: O *Rex Gentium* (O King of the Nations)

23 December: O *Emmanuel* (O With Us is God)



In the Roman rite, the O Antiphons are sung or recited at vespers from 17 December to 23 December inclusive.

ORIGIN

THE ANTIPHON TEXTS are believed to have originated in Italy in or before the sixth century. Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy includes a passage in which Lady Philosophy appears to cite the series:

EST IGITUR SUMMUM, inquit, bonum quod regit cuncta fortiter suaviterque disponit. 'He is the highest good, she said, that rules all things mightily and delightfully arranges them.' The underlying reference is to Wisdom 8:1, but the precise phrasing almost certainly refers to O sapientia.

THERE WERE MANY later traditions throughout the Middle Ages surrounding their performance, and Amalarius wrote a detailed commentary on them in the ninth century.

THE FIRST LETTERS of the titles, from last to first, appear to form a Latin acrostic, 'Ero cras', meaning 'Tomorrow, I will be [there]', mirroring the theme of the antiphons.

THIS IS FORMED from the first letter of each title – Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia. Such acrostics were popular among early medieval writers, and some scholars have taken this as further evidence for their antiquity, but this view is not universally accepted.

THE ADDED post-Christmas 'O' antiphon 'O Thoma Didyme'

A NUMBER of other antiphons were found in various medieval breviaries.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE "O ANTIPHONS" IS TWOFOLD:

FIRST, each one is a title for the Messiah.

SECONDLY, each one refers to the prophecy of Isaiah of the coming of the Messiah. The Latin antiphons are from the Breviarium Romanum. The English versions, which are not always literal translations of the Latin, are from the Church of England's Common Worship liturgy. Biblical quotations are from the NRSV.

December 17

O SAPIENTIA, quae ex ore Altissimi prodiisti, attingens a fine usque ad finem fortiter, suaviterque disponens omnia: veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.

O WISDOM, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from one end to the other, mightily and sweetly ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence.

ISAIAH had prophesied:

"The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah 11:2-3)

"[...] he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom." (Isaiah 28:29)

ALSO compare Sirach 24:1-5 and Wisdom of Solomon 8:1

THIS prophecy is also relevant in that it describes the Messiah as "coming forth from the mouth of the Most High", which is very significant in light of the Christian doctrine, rooted in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, according to which Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is The Incarnate Word of God the Father.

December 18

O ADONAI, et Dux domus Israël, qui Moyse in igne flammae rubi apparuisti, et ei in Sina legem dedisti: veni ad redimendum nos in brachio extento.

O MIGHTY LORD, and Leader of the house of Israël, Who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and on Sinai gave him the law: Come and redeem us with outstretched arm.

ISAIAH had prophesied:

"[...] but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins." (Isaiah 11:4-5)

"For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our ruler, the Lord is our king; he will save us." (Isaiah 33:22)

Also compare Exodus 3:2 and Exodus 24:12

December 19

O RADIX JESSE, qui stas in signum populorum, super quem continebunt reges os suum, quem gentes depcabuntur: veni ad liberandum nos, jam noli tardare.	O ROOT OF JESSE, standing as a sign among the peoples; before Thee kings will shut their mouths, to Thee the nations will make their prayer: Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.
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ISAIAH had prophesied:

"A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." (Isaiah 11:1)

"On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of Him, and His dwelling shall be glorious." (Isaiah 11:10)

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 5:2).

ALSO compare Isaiah 45:14, Isaiah 52:15 and Romans 15:12.

December 20

O CLAVIS DAVID, et sceptrum domus Israël, qui aperis, et nemo claudit, claudis, et nemo aperuit: veni, et educ vinctum de domo carceris, sedentem in tenebris, et umbra mortis.	O KEY OF DAVID, and scepter of the house of Israel; You open, and no one shuts; You shut, and no one opens: Come, and lead the prisoners from the prison house, those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death.
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ISAIAH had prophesied:

"I will place on His shoulder the key of the house of David; He shall open, and no one shall shut; He shall shut, and no one shall open." (Isaiah 22:22)

"His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore." (Isaiah 9:7)

"To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." (Isaiah 42:7.)

December 21

O ORIENS, splendor lucis aeternae, et sol justitiae: veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris, et umbra mortis.	O MORNING STAR, splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness: Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.
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(Note: A literal translation of the Latin yields "O Rising Sun", but the poetic "O Morning Star" or "O Dayspring" is often preferred.)

THE PHRASE 'O Oriens' comes from Zech. 3: 8: τὸν δοῦλόν μου Ανατολήν and servum meum Orientem. This should be compared with the Hebrew tzemach.

ISAIAH had prophesied:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined." (Isaiah 9:2)

ALSO compare Isaiah 60:1-2 and Malachi 4:2 or Malachi 3:20 (Hebrew text)

December 22

O REX GENTIUM, et desideratus earum, lapisque angularis, qui facis utraque unum: veni, et salva hominem, quem de limo formasti.	O KING OF THE NATIONS, and their desire, the cornerstone making both one: Come and save the human race, whom You fashioned from clay.
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See Haggai 2:7: *Et movebo omnes gentes, et veniet desideratus cunctis gentibus.* Compare the Greek πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

ISAIAH had prophesied: "For a Child has been born for us, a Son given us; authority rests upon His shoulders; and He is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

"He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2:4)

"But now, O LORD, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand. (Isaiah 64:8)

ALSO compare Isaiah 28:16 and Ephesians 2:14

December 23

O EMMANUEL, Rex et Legifer noster, expectatio Gentium, et Salvator earum: veni ad salvandum nos, Domine, Deus noster.	O EMMANUEL, our King and Lawgiver the hope of the nations their Savior: Come and save us, O Lord our God.
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ISAIAH had prophesied:

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with Child and shall bear a Son, and shall name Him Emmanuel." (Isaiah 7:14) [Emmanuel means God is with us].

