

Liturgical Living: The “O” Antiphons

December 17 marks the beginning of the "O" Antiphons. This is an ancient part of our liturgy, dating back to the fourth century, one for each day until Christmas Eve. These antiphons address Christ with seven magnificent Messianic titles, based on the Old Testament prophecies.

The O Antiphons are recited prior to the Magnificat during evening prayer (vespers) from December 17 through December 23. Each antiphon is addressed to God using a noble title for the Messiah, each antiphon petitions Him to come save His people, and each is tied to Mary because she is the vessel through which the Savior will be born.

Each of the seven antiphons begins by addressing Jesus using an Old Testament title for the Messiah. These seven names or titles, all from the Book of Isaiah, are:

Dec. 17: O' Sapientia (O Wisdom), Isaiah 11:2-3

Dec. 18: O' Adonai (O Lord or Ruler), Isaiah 11:4-5 and 33:22

Dec. 19: O' Radix (O Root of Jesse), Isaiah 11:1

Dec. 20: O' Clavis (O Key of David), Isaiah 22:22

Dec. 21: O' Oriens (O Radiant Dawn), Isaiah 9:1

Dec. 22: O' Rex Gentium (O King of the Nations), Isaiah 2:4

Dec. 23: O' Emmanuel (O God with Us), Isaiah 7:14

If you take the first letter of each Latin name and reverse the order — that is, begin with E from Emmanuel, then Rex Gentium and so on, you will spell the words ERO CRAS, which in Latin means “Tomorrow, I will come.”

Are you looking for some more information about the O Antiphons and how to incorporate them into your domestic church? Take a look through these links:

- [This article](#) does a great job of explaining what "antiphons" are, and then further explaining what the "O Antiphons" are.
- [Here is a link](#) to a free printable coloring book. There is also an option to print these pages as smaller images to make ornaments for your tree.
- [This is a free printable prayer guide](#) for praying the O Antiphons as part of evening vespers.
- [Here is a link](#) to request a free O Antiphons printable pack.
- [This link](#) will take you to a DIY candle craft.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel!

