

An Advent Examination of Conscience Based on the Advent "O" Antiphons





O Antiphons - December 17 - 24






December 17 marks the beginning of the "O" Antiphons, the seven jewels 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 and types of Christ. The antiphons beg God with mounting impatience to come and save His people.

The "O Antiphons" highlight a title for the Messiah: O Sapientia (O Wisdom), O Adonai (O Lord), O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse), O Clavis David (O Key of David), O Oriens (O Rising Sun), O Rex Gentium (O King of the Nations), and O Emmanuel. The first letter of the Messianic titles: Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia - spell out Latin words **ERO CRAS**, meaning, "*Tomorrow, I will come.*"

The "O" Antiphons are the verses for the ancient hymn *Veni Veni Emmanuel* ([O Come, O Come Emmanuel](#)).

The antiphons themselves are part of the Vespers or Evening Prayer of the Divine Office or Liturgy of the Hours. These antiphons are repeated before and after the *Magnificat*. The liturgy of the Mass hints at the O Antiphons, including excerpts at the Alleluia verse and other antiphons, but the actual O Antiphons are found only in the Divine Office.

Symbol	Meaning	Reflection
	<p>December 17: O Wisdom (<i>O Sapientia</i>)</p> <p>O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care. Come and show your people the way to salvation.</p>	<p>Jesus is the Wisdom of God Most High:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I permitted the teachings of Christ to guide my daily life? • Have I studied the Word of God and listened attentively to the Scripture Readings? • Have I permitted my mind, my attitude, my thinking to be renewed by Christ?
	<p>December 18: O Lord and Ruler (<i>O Adonai</i>)</p> <p>O sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.</p>	<p>Jesus is the Lord:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have I followed the Ten Commandments faithfully? • Do I love God above all else? • Have I put false gods before my true Lord and God?

Symbol	Meaning	Reflection
	<p>December 19: O Root of Jesse (<i>O Radix Jesse</i>)</p> <p>O Flower of Jesse's stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.</p>	<p>Jesus is the Root of Jesse's Stem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is my life rooted in Christ? • Do my daily actions reflect my relationship with Christ? • Do I put my hope and trust in God's promises and His will for my life? • Do I rely too heavily on my own strength?
	<p>December 20: O Key of David (<i>O Clavis David</i>)</p> <p>O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of heaven: come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom.</p>	<p>Jesus is the Key of David:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I make regular use of the Sacrament of Penance? • Am I enslaved to sins or habits from which I need freed? • Do I live as a worthy member of the Kingdom of God? • Do I believe firmly that Jesus is the key that opens for me the gates of heaven?
	<p>December 21: O Radiant Dawn (<i>O Oriens</i>)</p> <p>O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.</p>	<p>Jesus is the Radiant Dawn and Sun of Justice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I live as a child of the light? • Do my outward actions and words reflect my true self? • Am I a person of peace and goodwill? • Do others see Christ reflected in my words and actions?
	<p>December 22: O King of the Nations (<i>O Rex Gentium</i>)</p> <p>O King of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart; O Keystone of the mighty arch of man, come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust.</p>	<p>Jesus is the King of all nations and Keystone of the Church:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I proudly live out my faith in all that I say and do? • Do I invite others to know Christ and to come to the Church? • Am I faithful to my commitments to the Church and my parish family? • Do I strive to know and understand the teachings of Christ as handed on to me by the Church?
	<p>December 23: O Emmanuel</p> <p>O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God.</p>	<p>Jesus is Emmanuel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I aware and grateful for God's presence and action in my life? • Do I raise up my thoughts to the Lord throughout my daily work? • Do I reverence Christ truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament? • Do I find Christ present in the needs of the poor and the marginalized?