



O ANTIPHONS ADVENT REFLECTION



DECEMBER 17 - O SAPIENTIA (WISDOM)

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.

- *O Antiphons*

A READING FROM ISAIAH 11:2

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

A READING FROM BARUCH 3:9, 3:13-15, 3:32-4:4

Hear the commandments of life, O Israel;
give ear, and learn wisdom!
If you had walked in the way of God,
you would be dwelling in peace for ever.
Learn where there is wisdom,
where there is strength,
where there is understanding,
that you may at the same time discern
where there is length of days, and life,
where there is light for the eyes, and peace.
Who has found her place?
And who has entered her storehouses?

But he who knows all things knows her,
he found her by his understanding.
He who prepared the earth for all time
filled it with four-footed creatures;
he who sends forth the light, and it goes,
called it, and it obeyed him in fear;



the stars shone in their watches, and were glad;
he called them, and they said, "Here we are!"
They shone with gladness for him who made them.

This is our God;
no other can be compared to him!
He found the whole way to knowledge,
and gave her to Jacob his servant
and to Israel whom he loved.
Afterward she appeared upon earth
and lived among men.
She is the book of the commandments of God,
and the law that endures for ever.
All who hold her fast will live,
and those who forsake her will die.

Turn, O Jacob, and take her;
walk toward the shining of her light.
Do not give your glory to another,
or your advantages to an alien people.
Happy are we, O Israel,
for we know what is pleasing to God.

*O Wisdom, incarnate, with God in the beginning;
O Wisdom, craftsman, powerful builder and sustainer of all things;
O Wisdom, unfathomable mystery, in whom are hidden
all the treasures of insight and knowledge;
Breath of God's power, reflection of eternal light,
spotless mirror and image of his goodness;
Come to Us...*



DECEMBER 18 - O ADONAI (LORD)

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.
- *O Antiphons*

A READING FROM ISAIAH 11:4
But with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.

A READING FROM ISAIAH 33:21-22
But there the Lord in majesty will be for us
a place of broad rivers and streams,
where no galley with oars can go,
nor stately ship can pass.
For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our ruler,
the Lord is our king; he will save us.

A READING FROM EXODUS 19:9, 16-19, 20:1-6
And the Lord said to Moses, "Lo, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that
the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you for
ever."

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings, and
a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that
all the people who were in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the
people out of the camp to meet God; and they took their stand at the foot
of the mountain. And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the
Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke



of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.

And God spoke all these words, saying,
“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of bondage.

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

A READING FROM MICAH 5:2

But you, O Bethlehem Eph'rathah,
who are little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

O LORD unspeakable, flaming fire from within a bush;

O LORD of might, parting the waters of the sea;

O LORD unapproachable, of smoke, darkness and storm on Mount Sinai;

Our judge, lawgiver and king

Come to us...



DECEMBER 19 - O RADIX JESSE (ROOT OF JESSE)

O Root of Jesse,
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.
- *O Antiphons*

A READING FROM ISAIAH 10:33-11:2A, 11:5-10

Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts
will lop the boughs with terrifying power;
the great in height will be hewn down,
and the lofty will be brought low.
He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe,
and Lebanon with its majestic trees will fall.

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him...

Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist,
and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.
The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall feed;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.



They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.
In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples;
him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious.

A Reading from Isaiah 52:13-15
Behold, my servant shall prosper,
he shall be exalted and lifted up,
and shall be very high.
As many were astonished at him—
his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of the sons of men—
so shall he startle many nations;
kings shall shut their mouths because of him;
for that which has not been told them they shall see,
and that which they have not heard they shall understand.

A Reading from Habakkuk 2:3
For still the vision awaits its time;
it hastens to the end—it will not lie.
If it seem slow, wait for it;
it will surely come, it will not delay.

*O Root of Jesse, green shoot from blackened stump
O Root of Jesse, flesh of David, builder of God's house
O Root of Jesse, praise of the gentiles, banner of all peoples
Righteous Branch, you shall reign as king
Come to us...*



DECEMBER 20 - O CLAVIS DAVID (KEY OF DAVID)

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.

- *O Antiphons*

A READING FROM ISAIAH 22:22-23

And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David;
he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

And I will fasten him like a peg in a sure place,
and he will become a throne of honor to his father's house.

A READING FROM NUMBERS 24:17

I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not nigh:
a star shall come forth out of Jacob,
and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.

A READING FROM ISAIAH 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shined.

Thou hast multiplied the nation,
thou hast increased its joy;
they rejoice before thee
as with joy at the harvest,
as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.



For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
thou hast broken as on the day of Mid'ian.
For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government will be upon his shoulder,
and his name will be called
“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom,
to establish it, and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and for evermore.

O Key of David, throne and scepter over the house of Israel
O Key of David, breaker of bonds, opener of doors, liberator of captives
O Key of David, door of the sheepfold, way to our homeland
House of God; gate of heaven
Come to us...



DECEMBER 21 - O ORIENS (RADIANT DAWN)

O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
Come, shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death.

- *O Antiphons*

A READING FROM HEBREWS 1:1-3

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets;
but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the
heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature,
upholding the universe by his word of power.

A READING FROM MALACHI 4:1-3

For behold, the day comes, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and
all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the
Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.

But for you who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with
healing in its wings. You shall go forth leaping like calves from the stall. And
you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of
your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.

A READING FROM ISAIAH 58:8-10

Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am.

“If you take away from the midst of you the yoke,
the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,



if you pour yourself out for the hungry
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
then shall your light rise in the darkness
and your gloom be as the noonday.

A READING FROM ISAIAH 60:1-3, 19
Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will be seen upon you.
And nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your rising.
The sun shall be no more
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give light to you by night;
but the Lord will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.

A READING FROM LUKE 1:78-79
Through the tender mercy of our God,
when the day shall dawn upon us from on high
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

O Dawn of the East, flashing rays of splendor
O Dawn of the East, the first light of your appearing
drives away the shadow of death
O Dawn of the East, rebirth and bright and morning star
Upon you the LORD will dawn, and over you his glory will be seen
Come to us...



DECEMBER 22 - O REX GENTIUM (KING OF THE NATIONS)

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.
- O Antiphons

A READING FROM JEREMIAH 10:6-7

There is none like thee, O Lord;
thou art great, and thy name is great in might.
Who would not fear thee, O King of the nations?
For this is thy due;
for among all the wise ones of the nations
and in all their kingdoms
there is none like thee.

A READING FROM HAGGAI 2:6-9

For thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with splendor,' says the Lord of hosts. 'The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,' says the Lord of hosts. 'The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former,' says the Lord of hosts; 'and in this place I will give prosperity,' says the Lord of hosts.

A READING FROM ISAIAH 2:2-4

It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,
and many peoples shall come, and say:
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,



to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

A READING FROM EPHESIANS 2:19-22

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

O King of the Nations, chief cornerstone, binding the two into one
O King of the Nations, source and satisfaction of all true desires
O King of the Nations, giver and gatherer of all gifts
To you the kings of the earth will bring their treasure
Come to us...



DECEMBER 23 - O EMMANUEL (GOD IS WITH US)

O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver,
desire of the nations, Savior of all people:
Come and set us free, Lord our God.

- O Antiphons

A READING FROM ISAIAH 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Imman'u-el.

A READING FROM LUKE 1:31-33

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall call his name Jesus.
He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High;
and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,
and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever;
and of his kingdom there will be no end.

A READING FROM ISAIAH 43:1-2, 8-9A, 10-13

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you...

Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes,
who are deaf, yet have ears!
Let all the nations gather together,



and let the peoples assemble...
“You are my witnesses,” says the Lord,
“and my servant whom I have chosen,
that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am He.
Before me no god was formed,
nor shall there be any after me.
I, I am the Lord,
and besides me there is no savior.
I declared and saved and proclaimed,
when there was no strange god among you;
and you are my witnesses,” says the Lord.
“I am God, and also henceforth I am He;
there is none who can deliver from my hand;
I work and who can hinder it?”

A READING FROM 1 TIMOTHY 3:16
Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion:
He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit,
seen by angels,
preached among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.

*O Emmanuel, O spring of the Virgin's womb
O Emmanuel, God with us, even to the end of the age
O Emmanuel, sign from God that all shall be well
We wait for you and in our waiting, let us not lose heart...*



The O Antiphons refer to the seven antiphons that are chanted during Vespers of the Liturgy of the Hours in the Roman Catholic tradition. They have been traditionally celebrated in the days leading up to Christmas Eve (beginning on December 17), as the Advent season comes to its culmination. It is a liturgical tradition started in the earliest centuries of the Church and continues in monasteries and convents today, and in many homes throughout the world.

The first letter of each Antiphon (in Latin), when read from last to first, reads *ERO CRAS*. Translated, it means “Tomorrow, I will come.”

In honor of this tradition, we encourage you to walk through this Advent Antiphon reflection, by yourself, with friends or family, each evening from December 17-23. Light your Advent wreath (or a candle if you don't have a wreath), and read through each set of Scriptures, with deep presence and great anticipation.

Special thanks to Vincent Noth for the collect/reflections at the end of each antiphon. All Scripture references are taken from the RSV.