

The O Antiphons

Since the 7th century, the *Magnificat*, the song of Mary, is sung or said every day at Evening Prayer (just as the *Benedictus*, Zechariah's song, is associated with Morning Prayer and Simeon's Song is linked with Compline). During the last week before Christmas, there are a special little group of prayers called antiphons that you can use to wrap around the *Magnificat*.

These are called the O Antiphons, because they all begin with "O". If you pray Evening Prayer, try this: after the reading from Scripture, say the antiphon, and then pray the *Magnificat* which is on the second page, and then say the antiphon again. Or simply prepare for Christmas by praying the antiphons all by themselves.

- December 17: **O Sapientia**

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 11:2–3; 28:29)

- December 18: **O Adonai**

O Lord, and leader of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm. (Isaiah 11:4–5; 33:22)

- December 19: **O Radix Jesse**

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples; before you kings will shut their mouths, to you the nations will make their prayer: Come and deliver us, and delay no longer. (Isaiah 1:1; 11:10)

- December 20: **O Clavis David**

O Key of David and scepter of the House of Israel; you open and no one can shut; you shut and no one can open: Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house, those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. (See Isaiah 9:6; 22:22)

- December 21: **O Oriens**

O Morning Star, splendor of light eternal and sun of righteousness: Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. (Isaiah 9:1)

- December 22: **O Rex Gentium**

O King of the nations, and their desire, the cornerstone making both one: Come and save the human race, which you fashioned from clay. (Isaiah 9:5; 2:4)

- December 23: **O Emmanuel**

O God with us, our king and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their Savior: Come and save us, O Lord our God. (Isaiah 7:14)

The Magnificat
Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.