

Music for Liturgical Worship

Seven “O Antiphons”

Text Adaptation by Joel Sauerwein

Music By Andrew Sauerwein

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From The Seven “O Antiphons”

- L: O Wisdom, Come
C: O holy Word of God, with God from the beginning
With strong and tender care you govern all of creation
Come teach us truth and grant us wisdom
Show your people the way to salvation
L: O Wisdom, Come and save us.
C: Come and save us. Come and save us.
- L: O, Lord and Ruler of Israel, come
C: O bush burning with flame, yet not consumed
who on Sinai's mountain spoke aloud your holy Law
O Lord our judge, O Lord our ruler, O Lord our king,
stretch out your mighty hand and set us free.
L: O, Lord and Ruler of Israel, come and save us.
C: Come and save us. Come and save us.
- L: O Root and Stem of Jesse, come
C: O brilliant flower, raised high as a sign to all the world
In your presence earth's rulers stand silent
Before you all peoples of the earth bow down
Let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.
L: O Root and Stem of Jesse, Come and save us.
C: Come and save us. Come and save us.
- L: O Key of David, Come
C: O royal Lord who opens heavens gates
Break down our prison of death and darkness
You open the doors and none can shut them
Lead your captive people to freedom
L: O Key of David, Come and save us.
C: Come and save us. Come and save us.

L: O Dawn of the East, Come
C: O radiant dawn and dayspring of eternal splendor,
Son of justice, come disburse the gloom of night
We sit in darkness and death's shadow
come, rise upon us and bring us light
L: O Dawn of the East, Come and save us.
C: Come and save us. Come and save us.

L: O King of the Gentiles, Come
C: O Ruler of the nations, king over all the earth
the joy and fulfilment of every human heart
O cornerstone and capstone of all of life
Save us who you made from dust
L: O King of the Gentiles, Come and save us.
C: Come and save us. Come and save us.

L: O Emmanuel, Come
C: O Lord and God who gave the law, our Royal king
Desire of the nations, savior of all people
Come to your people and set them free
And be once more our God with us
L: O Emmanuel, Come and save us.
C: Come and save us. Come and save us.

Seven 'O' Antiphons

Text Adapted by Joel Sauerwein

Andrew Mark Sauerwein

I. O Sapientia

Score for "I. O Sapientia" (Antiphon I).

Parts:

- Voice/Inst. (optional)
- Leader & Congregation
- Piano, Organ, or Keyboard
- Inst.
- L/C

Lyrics:

Leader: O Wis-dom, come. People: O ho-ly Word of God, with

God from the be - gin-ning, With strong and ten-der care you gov-ern all of cre - a - tion.

The musical score is written for a choir and piano. It begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The first system includes staves for Voice/Inst. (optional), Leader & Congregation, and Piano, Organ, or Keyboard. The Leader & Congregation part is divided into a 'Leader:' section and a 'People:' section. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and a more melodic upper line. The second system continues the vocal parts and piano accompaniment, with the lyrics 'God from the be - gin-ning, With strong and ten-der care you gov-ern all of cre - a - tion.' written below the vocal staves. The score concludes with a final cadence in the piano part.

16

Inst.

L/C

8

Come teach us truth and grant us wis-dom. Show your peo-ple the way to sal - va - tion.

16

23

Inst.

Leader:

People:

L/C

8

O Wis-dom, come and save us. Come and save us. Come and save us.

23

II. O Adonai

30

Inst.

Leader:

L/C

8

O, Lord and Rul - er of Is - ra - el, come.

30

36

Inst.

People:

L/C

8

O bush burn - ing with flame, yet not con - sumed, Who on Si - nai's moun - tain

36

42

Inst.

L/C

8

spoke a - loud your ho - ly law, O Lord our — judge, O Lord our —

42

The musical score is written for three parts: Instrumental (Inst.), Vocal Leader (L/C), and Piano (P). The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into three systems, each starting with a measure number (30, 36, 42). The first system (measures 30-35) features the Leader's vocal line with the lyrics 'O, Lord and Rul - er of Is - ra - el, come.' The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and sustained notes in the left hand. The second system (measures 36-41) features the People's vocal line with the lyrics 'O bush burn - ing with flame, yet not con - sumed, Who on Si - nai's moun - tain'. The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic support. The third system (measures 42-47) features the vocal line with the lyrics 'spoke a - loud your ho - ly law, O Lord our — judge, O Lord our —'. The piano accompaniment concludes the phrase with sustained chords.

48

Inst.

L/C

8

ru - ler, O Lord our — king, Stretch out your might - y hand and set us

54

Inst.

Leader:

L/C

8

free. O, Lord and Ru - ler of Is - ra - el,

59

Inst.

People:

L/C

8

come and save us. Come and save us. Come and save us.

III. O Radix Jesse

64

Inst.

L/C

Leader:

O Root and Stem of Jes - se, come.

64

69

Inst.

L/C

People:

O bril - liant flow - er, raised high as a sign to all the world,

69

75

Inst.

L/C

In your pre - sence earth's ru - lers stand si - lent. Be - fore you all

75

The musical score is written for three vocal parts (Instrumental, Leader, and People) and piano accompaniment. It is divided into three systems, each starting with a measure number (64, 69, 75). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 3/4 to 4/4 and back to 3/4. The instrumental part (Inst.) is in treble clef. The leader and people parts (L/C) are in treble clef with a common time signature of 8. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: 'O Root and Stem of Jes - se, come.' (measures 64-68), 'O bril - liant flow - er, raised high as a sign to all the world,' (measures 69-74), and 'In your pre - sence earth's ru - lers stand si - lent. Be - fore you all' (measures 75-79). There are triplets in measures 65, 70, and 76.

81

Inst.

L/C

81

8

peo - ples of the earth bow down. Let no-thing keep you from com - ing to our

87

Inst.

Leader:

L/C

87

8

aid. O Root and Stem of Jes - se,

92

Inst.

People:

L/C

92

8

come and save us. Come and save us. Come and save us.

IV. O Clavis David

97

Inst.

Leader:

People:

L/C

8

O Key of Da - vid, come. O roy - al Lord who o - pens

103

Inst.

L/C

8

hea - ven's gates, Break down our pri - son of death and dark - ness. You —

103

108

Inst.

L/C

8

o - pen the doors and none can shut them. Lead your cap - tive peo - ple

113

Inst.

L/C

8

to — free-dom. O ——— Key of Da - vid,

Leader:

118

Inst.

L/C

8

come and save us. Come and save us. Come and save us.

People:

V. O Oriens

123

Inst.

L/C

Leader:

People:

8

O Dawn of the East, come. O ra-diant

128

Inst.

L/C

8

Dawn and Day-spring of e - ter - nal splen - dor, Son of just - ice,

128

134

Inst.

L/C

8

come dis - perse the gloom of night. We sit in dark - ness and death's sha-dow. Come,

139

Inst.

L/C

8

rise up - on us and bring us light. O Dawn of the

Leader:

144

Inst.

L/C

8

East, come and save us. Come and save us. Come and save us.

People:

VI. O Rex Gentium

149 *faster*

Inst.

Leader:

People:

L/C

8 O King of the Gen - tiles, come. O Rul - er of the

149 *faster*

Inst.

L/C

8 na - tions, king o - ver all the earth, The joy — and ful - fill - ment

154

Inst.

L/C

8

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system (measures 149-153) includes an instrumental part (Inst.) and a vocal part (L/C) with lyrics. The instrumental part starts with a rest in 4/4 time, then changes to 3/4 time. The vocal part has two parts: 'Leader:' and 'People:'. The piano accompaniment (piano) is shown in the second system (measures 149-153). The second system (measures 154-158) includes an instrumental part (Inst.) and a vocal part (L/C) with lyrics. The instrumental part starts with a rest in 4/4 time, then changes to 3/4 time. The vocal part has two parts: 'Leader:' and 'People:'. The piano accompaniment (piano) is shown in the third system (measures 154-158). The tempo marking 'faster' appears above the instrumental part in both systems.

159

Inst.

L/C

8 of ev - 'ry hu-man heart, O — Cor - ner-stone and — Cap - stone of — all of life,

164

Inst.

L/C

8 Save us whom you made from dust. O King of the Gen-tiles,

rit.

Leader:

169

Inst.

L/C

8 come and save us. Come and save us. Come and save us.

People:

VII. O Emmanuel

174

Inst.

Leader:

L/C

8

O Em - man - u - el, Em - man - u - el, come.

174

181

Inst.

People:

L/C

8

O — Lord and God — who gave the law, our Roy-al King, De - sire of the Na-tions,

181

188

Inst.

L/C

8

Sav - ior of all peo - ple, Come to your peo - ple and set them free,

188

The musical score is written for three vocal parts (Instrumental, Leader, and People) and piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into three systems, each starting with a measure number (174, 181, and 188). The instrumental part (Inst.) is written in treble clef. The leader part (L/C) is written in treble clef and includes lyrics. The piano accompaniment (P) is written in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: 'O Emmanuel, come. O Lord and God who gave the law, our Royal King, desire of the Nations, Savior of all people, Come to your people and set them free.'

194

Inst.

L/C

8

And be once more our God with us. O Em - man - u -

Leader:

199

Inst.

L/C

8

el, Em - man - u - el, come and save us.

205

Inst.

People:

L/C

8

Come and save us. Come and save us.

205

p

What are the “O Antiphons?”

According to Fr. William Saunders, the exact origin of the "O Antiphons" is not known. Boethius (480–524/5) used language which may be a reference to them, thereby suggesting their presence in the sixth century. By the eighth century, they were in use in the liturgical celebrations in Rome. The usage of the "O Antiphons" was so prevalent in monasteries that the phrases "Keep your O" and "The Great O Antiphons" were common parlance. One may thereby conclude that in some fashion the "O Antiphons" have been part of Western liturgical tradition since the very early Church.¹

The O Antiphons are Magnificat antiphons used at Vespers of the last seven days of Advent in Western Christian traditions. Each antiphon is based on a name of Christ, and a text from the prophet Isaiah about one of his attributes mentioned in Scripture. They are:

December 17: O Sapientia (O Wisdom)

December 18: O Adonai (O Lord)

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

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

December 21: O Oriens (O Dayspring)

December 22: O Rex Gentium (O King of the nations)

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

In the Roman Catholic tradition in which they originated, the O Antiphons are sung or recited at Vespers from December 17 to December 23. In the Church of England they have traditionally been used as antiphons to the Magnificat at Evening Prayer and have long been part of secondary Anglican liturgical sources, such as the English Hymnal. Use of the O Antiphons also occurs in many Lutheran churches. In the Book of Common Worship published by the Presbyterian Church (USA), the antiphons can be read as a praise litany at Morning or Evening Prayer. The hymn O come, O come, Emmanuel (in Latin, Veni Emmanuel) is a lyrical paraphrase of these antiphons.

The Benedictine monks arranged these antiphons with a definite purpose. If one starts with the last title and takes the first letter of each one—Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia—the Latin words *ero cras* are formed, meaning, "Tomorrow, I will come". Therefore Jesus, whose coming Christians have prepared for in Advent and whom they have addressed in these seven Messianic titles, now speaks to them: "Tomorrow, I will come." So the "O Antiphons" not only bring intensity to their Advent preparation, but bring it to a joyful conclusion."²

English renditions of the Latin antiphon texts are not always translations. That is true of the case of the texts used in these works. The attempt was made to be true to the intent of the text while paraphrasing them into verses of approximately the same size for use in worship services during advent. Here, they were intended to be sung antiphons, but ones that could be used throughout the Advent season, not necessarily on the dates historically used since most American churches no longer have daily vesper services during Advent. They were originally compiled for use at St. John's Lutheran Church in Nezperce, Idaho.

1. Saunders, William, What are the "O Antiphons"?, CatholicEducation.org, retrieved 30 November 2009. Father William Saunders is dean of the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College and pastor of Our Lady of Hope Parish in Sterling, Virginia. The above article contains information from the "Straight Answers" column he wrote for the *Arlington Catholic Herald*. Father Saunders is also the author of *Straight Answers*, a book based on 100 of his columns and published by Cathedral Press in Baltimore.

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