PRAYING THE Advent Names of God

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CONTENTS

How to Pray the Advent Names of God	3
Magnificat	3
O Wisdom	4-5
O Adonai	6-7
O Root of Jesse	8-9
O Key of David	10-11
O Dayspring	12-13
O King of Gentiles	14-15
O Source	16-17
O Emmanuel	18-19
What Do I Carry Away?	
Christmas	22

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How to Pray the Advent Names of God

he practice of praising God throughout the day reaches back to Israel's temple with dawn and dusk the most important times for prayer and offering sacrifices. After Jesus' death and resurrection, his followers continue to join in these daily prayers and draw on Israel's scriptures to express who Jesus is.

In the Liturgy of the Hours today, the Christian community prays the 150 psalms of the Hebrew Bible each week. Antiphons before and after psalms and songs invite those praying to reflect on who Jesus is in sync with the liturgical year and its seasons.

Vespers, the prayer for the evening hour, culminates with Mary's song of praise and thanksgiving, the Magnificat. Its name is the first word of the song in Latin. When her kinswoman Elizabeth affirms Mary is blessed among women and will give birth to God for our world, Mary bursts into song, "My soul magnifies the Holy One." An antiphon always precedes the Magnificat and ties the longings of Advent with Mary's song of thanks at day's end.

On the last days of Advent, December 17 to 23, the antiphons that precede the Magnificat draw on the scriptures of Israel and plead for God's promised messiah to come. Each of the seven antiphons starts with an O and addresses God in prayer. Together the antiphons bring Israel's history to focus on Jesus, God with us.

Ansgar Holmberg, CSJ, and Joan Mitchell, CSJ, reflect in image and word on the Advent names of God in the O Antiphons. The images and prayer poems translate the ancient images of God into the context of our evolving cosmos.

Read the visual, the original, the prayer poem. Remain with a word, fall into prayer and silence.

MAGNIFICAT

My life is praise to you, giver of life. I rejoice in the One who makes me whole. You have looked upon me just as I am. I sing Amen of my child, your gift.

Holy God is your name. Power is your arm; mercy is your hand; new life your word in me.

You scatter the unbelieving in their certainty: You pull down the oppressor and lift up the forgotten ones. You fill the hungering and let the rich go empty.

Holy God, you remember and the impossible comes to be. We are Amen to birth without end.

Translated by Joan Mitchell,CSJ

PECEMBER 21



O RISING DAWN, Radiance of the Light eternal and Sun of Justice; come, and enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

Magnificat Antiphon for Vespers, December 21

SCRIPTURE SOURCES

Wisdom is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of God's goodness (Wisdom 7.26).

For you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings (Malachi 4.2).





O DAYSPRING,

with resilient resolve to break open the sky again to rise with the sun and walk again to clean and clear the encircling soot of our heedless ways we the problem we the answer we of small choices that all matter most spring rises in the choice to plant again to hold sacred the promise in seeds to turn the wasteland green to drink deep of aquifers unbottled to open our hearts to more than our own kind to every kind, otherkind binding our enduring loves

with those to come

shine on the shadowed restore us to joy and play who keep faith that your gifts and ours can sustain the common good.

WHAT DO I CARRY AWAY?

Write what inspires you in the art and prayer poems—a prayer of your own, a favorite image, a word, an insight, an action.

O Wisdom
O Holy I Am
O Root of Jesse