

Sunday Newsletter
J.M.J.
Third Sunday of Advent
Gaudete Sunday
12-15-2024

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Part 1: Epistle & Gospel

EPISTLE (Phil. 4:4-7). Brethren, rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL (Jn. 1:19-28). At that time the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to John, to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and did not deny; and he confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he said: I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. They said therefore unto him, Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? what sayst thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. And they that were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying: I baptize with water: but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not: the same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Part 2: Weekly Ordo & Mass Schedule

This upcoming week's TLM Mass Schedule & Parish Ordo

Date & Time	Day of Week	Mass	Color	Gloria/Credo	Preface	Commemoration(s)	Notes
12/15/2024 Noon	Sunday	3rd Sunday of Advent	Rose	c	Trinity		
12/16/2024 8am	Monday	St. Eusebius	Red	g	Common	Feria	
12/17/2024 8am	Tuesday	Advent Feria (Mass of the 3rd Sunday of Advent)	Violet		Common		omit Alleluia
12/18/2024 8am	Wednesday	Ember Wednesday in Advent	Violet		Common		
12/19/2024 8am	Thursday	Advent Feria (Mass of the 3rd Sunday of Advent)	Violet		Common		omit Alleluia
12/20/2024 8am	Friday	Ember Friday in Advent	Violet		Common	St. Eusebius	
12/21/2024 No Mass	Saturday	St. Thomas	Red	g	Apostles	Ember Saturday	
12/22/2024 Noon	Sunday	4th Sunday of Advent	Violet	c	Trinity		

Part 3: Announcements

1. More Information on Notes & Announcements

- Please visit embercatholic.com to read this Sunday's Newsletter, which contains the following announcements, sermon notes, links, and Sunday Catechesis Home Lessons.

2. Ember Days This Week

- Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday this week are traditional days of fasting and abstinence.
 - USA Customs:
 - Fasting and Partial Abstinence [in USA] on Ember Wednesday & Ember Saturday
 - Fasting and Full Abstinence on Ember Friday

3. Pray for two babies who will be baptized today [12/15/2024]

4. Wednesdays in Advent

- 5:45pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
- 6:00pm Solemn Vespers with Advent Homily
- 6:30pm Confessions Begin with Silent Eucharistic Adoration
- 7:20pm Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and Reposition
- 8:00pm Confessions End

5. Christmas & Holy Day Schedule

- December 25, 2024
 - Midnight TLM
 - Noon TLM

b. January 1, 2025

i. 8am TLM

ii. 6pm TLM

6. Seminarian Connor Williams:

a. Please Send Letters & Alms to [ICK](#) Seminarian Connor Williams:

i. 517 Elm St. Rockford IL, 61102

ii. givesendgo.com/GD8EE (for online donations/messages)

7. Pray for:

a. Christians in Syria and Gaza

b. Deacon John-Paul Fruge, CJC who was ordained yesterday (12/14/24)

Part 4: Sermon

Bibliography

Catholic Culture ([here](#) and [here](#))

Dom Gueranger ([here](#))

Divine Office ([here](#))

Other ([here](#))

INTRODUCTION

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice...The Lord is nigh... in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God.” - These words are taken from today’s Epistle. +

Today, we will have a sermon on the “O Antiphons.”

Q. When are the “O” Antiphons prayed?

A. They are prayed from December 17 through December 23 each year.

Q. What are the “O” Antiphons?

A. The “O” Antiphons are the seven antiphons sung in the Divine Office found in the Roman Breviary at Vespers during the Antiphon for the Magnificat during seven days preceding the vigil of Christmas. The “O” Antiphons are also known as the “greater antiphons.” These brief antiphons can be recited each evening by families before dinner.

Q. What are the opening words of each antiphon?

A. The opening words are as follows:

1. December 17 "O Sapientia/ O Wisdom"

2. December 18 "O Adonai/ O Lord"

3. December 19 "O Radix Jesse/ O Root of Jesse"
4. December 20 "O Clavis David/ O Key of David"
5. December 21 "O Oriens/ O Day-Spring"
6. December 22 "O Rex Gentium/ O King of the Gentiles"
7. December 23 "O Emmanuel/ O God with us"

Q. Why are they called the "O" Antiphons?"

A. They are so-called because all seven antiphons begin with the interjection "O."

Q. Why are the "O" Antiphons important today?

A. The deep theology of each "O" Antiphon makes clear and implies the following doctrines:

1. Christmas is about Christ.
2. In fact, everything is about Christ.
3. Christ fulfills Old Testament Prophecy.
4. Salvation is only found in Christ and in his Church.
5. Christ was born not to show us we have infinite dignity on our own, as the neo-modernists like to repeat, but rather, Christ was born to restore Glory to His Father, and save us from sin, hell, and the devil. Christ was born to die on the Cross.
6. Adam, the first man, was made directly by God from the mud of the earth and did not evolve from space slime over millions of years.
7. Those religions and nations that reject Christ as king work for the Anti-Christ.
8. Christ is King. All Families, Governments, and Nations owe him love and obedience.
9. Christ brings peace, hope, and light.

Q. Who do these "O" Antiphons address?

A. Each "O" Antiphon is a fervent prayer addressed to Christ under one or other of His titles.

Q. How do the "O" Antiphons conclude?

A. Each "O" Antiphons begins with a title of Christ, followed by an elaboration of that title. Then, each "O" Antiphon concludes with a distinct petition to the coming Lord. For example: "O Wisdom ... come and teach us the way of prudence" or "O Key of David ... come and lead from prison the captive sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death."

Q. Are these titles used in the "O" Antiphons scriptural? Do these titles show how Christ fulfills Old Testament Prophecy?

A. Yes, each one of these titles is based on Scripture. Each title shows how Christ fulfills Old Testament prophecy, especially in the Old Testament Books of Exodus, Numbers, Wisdom, Sirach, and in the books of the following Old Testament prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zechariah, Malachi, and Haggai.

1. December 17 "O Sapientia/ O Wisdom"

- a. **Title:** O Wisdom (Sirach 24:3),
- b. **Explanation of Title:** You came forth from the mouth of the Most High (Sirach 24:3), and reaching from beginning to end You ordered all things mightily and sweetly (Wisdom 8:1).
- c. **Petition:** Come, and teach us the way of prudence (Isaiah 40:14).

2. December 18 "O Adonai/ O Lord"

- a. **Title:** O Adonai (Exod 3:14)
- b. **Explanation of Title:** And Ruler of the house of Israel (Matt 2:6; Micah 5:1; 2 Sam 5:2), You appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush (Exod 3:2) and on Mount Sinai gave him Your Law (Exod 20).
- c. **Petition:** Come, and with an outstretched arm redeem us (Jeremiah 32:21).

3. December 19 "O Radix Jesse/ O Root of Jesse"

- a. **Title:** O Root of Jesse, (Isaiah 11:1)
- b. **Explanation of Title:** You stand for the ensign of mankind (Isaiah 11:10); before You kings shall keep silence and to You all nations shall have recourse (Isaiah 52:15).
- c. **Petition:** Come, save us, and do not delay (Habakkuk 2:3).

4. December 20 "O Clavis David/ O Key of David"

- a. **Title:** O Key of David, (Isaiah 22:22; Revelation 3:7)
- b. **Explanation of Title:** And Scepter of the house of Israel (Numbers 24:17): You open and no man closes; you close and no man opens (Isaiah 22:22).
- c. **Petition:** Come, and deliver him from the chains of prison who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death (Ps 107:10).

5. December 21 "O Oriens/ O Rising Dawn"

- a. **Title:** O Rising Dawn, (Jer 23:5; Zechariah 3:8; 6:12),
- b. **Explanation of Title:** Radiance of the Light eternal (Habakkuk 3:4; Wisdom 7:26; Hebrews 1:3) and Sun of Justice (Malachi 3:20):
- c. **Petition:** Come, and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death (Ps 107:10; Lk 1:78).

6. December 22 "O Rex Gentium/ O King of the Gentiles"

- a. **Title:** O King of the Gentiles (Jeremiah 10:7; Haggai 2:7),
- b. **Explanation of Title:** And the Desired of all, You are the Cornerstone that binds two into one (Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21:42; Ephesians 2:20).
- c. **Petition:** Come, and save man whom You fashioned out of clay (Genesis 2:7).

7. December 23 "O Emmanuel/ O God with us"

- a. **Title:** O Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8; Luke 1:31-33),
- b. **Explanation of Title:** Our King and Lawgiver (Genesis 49:10; cf. Ezekiel 21:32), the Expected of the nations and their Savior (Isa 33:22):
- c. **Petition:** Come, and save us, O Lord our God.

Q. Why are the "O" Antiphons sung at Vespers in the evening rather than at another hour?

A. The "O" Antiphons are sung at Vespers in the evening rather than at another hour because the Savior came in the evening hour of the world.

Q. Why is the "O" Antiphon used as an antiphon for the Magnificat?

A. The "O" Antiphons are used as an antiphon for the Magnificat in order to honor Mary, who spoke the Magnificat, the same Mary through whom Christ came.

Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) "And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. Because he that is mighty, hath done great things to me; and holy is his name. And his mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear him. He hath shewed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy: As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever. "

Q. Do the first letters of the "O" Antiphons form an acrostic?

A. The first letters, from last to first, of the "O" Antiphons form the Latin acrostic: *Ero cras*, meaning "Tomorrow, I will be [there]," mirroring the theme of the antiphons. This is formed from the first letter of each title – Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia.

Q. Are the "O" Antiphons paraphrased in any hymn?

A. The "O" Antiphons are paraphrased in the hymn "Veni, veni, Emmanuel." This is a great hymn to pray during advent.

Q. What are the lyrics of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel?"

A. *O Come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.*

Refrain:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

- B. *O come, Thou Wisdom, from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go.*

Refrain

- C. *O come, o come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times did give the law,
In cloud, and majesty, and awe.*

Refrain

- D. *O come, Thou Rod of Jesse's stem,
From ev'ry foe deliver them
That trust Thy mighty power to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.*

Refrain

- E. *O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home,
Make safe the way that leads on high,
That we no more have cause to sigh.*

Refrain

- F. *O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadow put to flight.*

Refrain

- G. *O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid every strife and quarrel cease
And fill the world with heaven's peace.*

Refrain

Part 5: Weekly Catechism Home Lessons

Devotion to the Crib of Christ

Donovan, S. (1908). Crib. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company.

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04488c.htm>

Nihil Obstat. Remy Lafort, Censor. *Imprimatur.* +John M. Farley, Archbishop of New York

The crib or manger in which the Infant Saviour was laid after his birth is properly that place in the stable or khan where food for domestic animals is put, formed probably of the same material out of which the grotto itself is hewn. A very ancient tradition avers that an ass and an ox were in the stable when Christ was born. The tradition bears an allusion to Isaias (1:3): "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib"; and is probably founded on the words of the Prophet Habacuc (iii, 2) which in the Septuagint version read: "In the midst of two animals thou shalt be known", instead of "In the midst of years" etc. as St. Jerome rightly translated the original Hebrew. Be this as it may, what pertains to the crib we may consider in the present article under three separate headings: (I) The Basilica of the Nativity and the Grotto of the Nativity at Bethlehem; (II) The relics of the crib preserved at St. Mary Major's in Rome; (III) Devotion to the crib.

I. Bethlehem is situated on two hills and is 2361 feet above the level of the sea. The western hill is the Bethlehem of Scripture; whilst on the eastern elevation is situated the Basilica of the Nativity erected over the grotto. We may imagine, then, that the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, there being "no room for them in the inn", left the town and came to the cave or stable on the eastern hill which served as a place of refuge for shepherds and their flocks against the inclemency of the weather. We are not concerned here with the controversies both as regards the historicity of St. Luke's narrative of the birth of Christ and as regards the actual site of the Grotto of the Nativity. Suffice it to say that there appears to be no sufficient reason for abandoning the very ancient and unbroken tradition which attests the authenticity of the place of the crib now venerated. From the earliest times, moreover, ecclesiastical writers bear witness to this tradition. Thus St. Justin, who died a martyr in 165, says that "Having failed to find any lodging in the town, Joseph sought shelter in a neighbouring cavern of Bethlehem" (Dialogue with Trypho 70). About half a century later, Origen writes: "If any one desires to satisfy himself without appealing either to the prophecy of Micheas, or to the history of the Christ as written by his disciples, that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, let him know that, in accordance with the Gospel narrative, at Bethlehem is shown the grotto where he first saw the light" (Against Celsus I.51).

St. Helena first converted the grotto into a chapel and adorned it with costly marble and other precious ornaments. The first basilica erected over the crypt is due most probably to the devotion and munificence of her son Constantine, of whom Eusebius says that "The emperor himself, eclipsing even the magnificence of his mother's design, adorned the same place in a truly regal style" (Life of Constantine III.43). Both the grotto itself and the basilica have undergone numerous restorations and modifications made necessary in the course of centuries by the ravages of war and invasion; but, at the present time, little remains of the splendid mosaics and paintings described in detail by Quaresimus and other writers. The Crypt of the Nativity is reached from the upper church by a double flight of stairs leading from the north side of the choir of the basilica to the grotto

below, and converging at the place where according to tradition the Infant Saviour was born. The exact spot is marked by a star cut out of stone, surrounding which are the words:

HIC DE VIRGINE MARIA JESUS CHRISTUS NATUS EST.

A short distance to the southwest is the manger itself where Christ was laid and where, as tradition asserts, he was adored by the Magi. In 1873 the grotto was plundered by the Greeks and everything of value, including two paintings by Murillo and Maello respectively, was carried off. No restitution of the stolen treasures has since been made.

II. The relics of the crib that are preserved at St. Mary Major's in Rome were probably brought there from the Holy Land during the pontificate of Pope Theodore (640-649), who was himself a native of Palestine, and who was well aware of the dangers of plunder and pillage to which they were exposed at the hands of the Mussulmans and other marauders. We find at all events that the basilica erected by Liberius on the Esquiline first received the name of Sancta Maria ad Praesepe under Pope Theodore. During the pontificate of Hadrian I the first altar was erected in the basilica, and in the course of succeeding centuries the place where the relics are preserved came to be visited by the devout faithful from all parts of the Christian world. At the present time the remains of the crib preserved at St. Mary Major's consist of five pieces of board which, as a result of the investigation conducted by Father Lais, sub-director of the Vatican Observatory, during the restorations of 1893 were found to be taken from a sycamore tree of which there are several varieties in the Holy Land. Two of the pieces, which like the other three, must have been originally much longer than they are at present, stood upright in the form of an X, upon which three other pieces rested, supported by a sixth piece, which, however, is missing, placed across the base of the upper angle of the X. We may conclude from this that these pieces of wood were properly speaking mere supports for the manger itself, which was probably made from the soft limestone of which the cave was formed. The rich reliquary, adorned with bas-reliefs and statuettes, which at present contains the relics of the crib was presented by the Duchess of Villa Hermosa in 1830. Pius IV (1559-65) restored the high altar upon which the relics are solemnly exposed for the veneration of the faithful yearly on the eve of Christmas.

III. Devotion to the crib is no doubt of very ancient origin; but it remained for St. Francis of Assisi to popularize it and to give to it the tangible form in which it is known at the present time. When St. Francis visited Rome in 1223, he made known to Pope Honorius III the plans he had conceived of making a scenic representation of the place of the Nativity. The pope listened gladly to the details of the project and gave it his sanction. Leaving Rome, St. Francis arrived at Greccio on Christmas Eve, when, through the aid of his friend Giovanni Velita, he constructed a crib and grouped around it figures of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, the ass, the ox, and the shepherds who came to adore the new-born Saviour. He acted as deacon at the midnight Mass. The legend relates

that having sung the words of the Gospel "and they laid him in a manger" he knelt down to meditate briefly on the sublime mystery of the Incarnation, and there appeared in his arms a child surrounded by a brilliant light. A painting by Giotto representing St. Francis celebrating Christmas at Greccio is preserved in the Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi. Devotion to the crib has since spread throughout the Christian world. Yearly, from the eve of Christmas until the day of the octave of Epiphany, a crib representing the birthplace of Christ is shown in all Catholic churches in order to remind the faithful of the mystery of the Incarnation and to recall according to tradition and the Gospel narrative the historical events connected with the birth of the Redeemer. The old Franciscan church of Ara Coeli possesses perhaps one of the largest and most beautiful cribs in the world. In this crib the famous Santo Bambino di Ara Coeli is exposed from the eve of Christmas to the feast of the Epiphany. The Santo Bambino is a figure carved out of wood representing the new-born Saviour. It is said to have come from the Holy Land, and in the course of time it has been bedecked with numerous jewels of great value. It is carried in procession yearly on the feast of the Epiphany by the Minister General of the Friars Minor who solemnly blesses the city with it from the top of the high flight of stairs that lead to the main entrance of Ara Coeli.