

## THE CHRISTMAS NOVENA

*Catholics in many cultures have traditionally prayed the Christmas Novena (nine consecutive days of prayer) from December 16-24. This devotion is centered on our expectation of the Coming King, and helps to prepare us spiritually to receive Him into our hearts. The Christmas Novena begins with the Our Father and Hail Mary, and its structure resembles the prayers for Vespers of the Breviary, or Divine Office. This form of prayer is especially suitable for devotions in Catholic homes — the “Domestic Church” — thus the suggested assignment of readers reflects family prayer.*

**All:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary...

**Father:** O Lord, open my lips.

**All:** And my mouth shall proclaim Your praise.

**Father:** O God, come to my assistance.

**All:** O Lord, make haste to help us. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

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**Father:** The Lord our Coming King, hasten to adore.

**All:** The Lord our Coming King, hasten to adore.

**Eldest child:** Rejoice, O Daughter of Sion, and exult, O Daughter of Jerusalem.

**All:** The Lord our Coming King, hasten to adore.

**Eldest child:** Behold, He that is God and man shall come forth from the house of David, His Father, to sit upon His throne, and you shall see Him and your heart shall rejoice.

**All:** Hasten to adore.

**Eldest child:** Behold, the Lord shall come, our Protector, the Holy One of Israel, bearing on His head the crown of the Kingdom.

**All:** The Lord Our Coming King, hasten to adore.

**Eldest child:** The Lord will descend, as rain on the field. His justice shall rise in those days, and all the kings of the earth shall adore Him, all nations shall serve Him.

**All:** Hasten to adore.

**Eldest child:** A child shall be born to us, and He shall be called the God of strength. Bethlehem, city of the Highest God, out from you shall go forth the ruler of Israel, and peace will be on the earth, when He shall have come.

**All:** The Lord our coming King, hasten to adore.

**Father:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

**All:** As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**All:** The Lord, our Coming King, hasten to adore.

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**All:** Blow ye the trumpet in Sion, for the day of the Lord is nigh: behold, He will come to save us. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Father:** Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult. Praise the Lord, you mountains.

**All:** Let the mountains break forth into gladness, and the hills with justice.

**Father:** For the Lord shall come and to the poor He shall show mercy.

**All:** Drop down dew, you heavens, from above and let the clouds rain down the Just One.

**Father:** Let the earth be opened and bud forth the Savior.

**All:** Be mindful of us, O Lord, and visit us in Your salvation.

**Father:** Show to us, O Lord, Your mercy, and grant us your salvation.

**All:** Come, O Lord, in peace visit us that with a perfect heart we may rejoice before You.

**Father:** Come, O Lord, do not tarry; do away with the offenses of Your people.

**All:** Come and show to us Your countenance, O Lord. You sit upon the cherubim.

**Father:** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

**All:** As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**All:** Blow ye the trumpet in Sion, for the day of the Lord is nigh; behold, He will come to save us. Alleluia, alleluia.

### READING [Isaiah 35:1-7a]

**Mother:** A reading from the prophet Isaiah: The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the rose it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the weak

knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.”

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

*On December 16 and 24, continue:* “Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel. Alleluia, alleluia.”

*From December 17-23, say the O Antiphon of the day.*

### THE MAGNIFICAT [Luke 1:46-55]

**Father:** My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

**All:** For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

**Father:** For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

**All:** And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

**Father:** He has shown strength with His arm, He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

**All:** He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted those of low degree.

**Father:** He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.

**All:** He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy.

**Father:** As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his posterity forever.

**All:** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

**Father:** As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**All:** (*December 17-23, repeat the O Antiphon of the day.*)

### CONCLUDING PRAYERS

**Father:** O Lord, hear my prayer.

**All:** And let my cry come to You.

# The Christmas Novena

**Father:** Let us pray. Stir up Thy power and come, we beseech Thee, O Lord, and with great might help us. May our deliverance, which our sins impede, be hastened by the help of Thy grace and the forgiveness of Thy mercy. Who lives and reigns forever and ever.

**All:** Amen.

**Father:** Let us bless the Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Father:** May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

**All:** Amen.

**All:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. ✠

## THE GREAT "O ANTIPHONS"

The O Antiphons are seven jewels of liturgical song that express our Advent longing for the Savior. The final phase of preparation for Christmas begins on the evening of December 17, with the first of the great O Antiphons. One is said each day, ending on December 23.

The O Antiphons are intoned with special solemnity as the antiphons to the Magnificat, Mary's prayer of praise and thanksgiving from the Gospel of Luke (1:46-55), which is sung every evening as the climax of this Hour of the Divine Office.

Each antiphon is a title of the Messiah, and each refers to the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. The Latin titles (from the Breviarium Romanum): O Sapientia, O Adonai, O Radix Jesse, O Clavis David, O Oriens, O Rex Gentium, O Emmanuel. A vestige of the Great Os can be seen in verses of the familiar Advent hymn "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."

The sublime meditation of the Great Os are beautiful additions to family prayers just before Christmas when incorporated into the Christmas Novena. An O Antiphon House, similar to an Advent calendar, can be made, with seven windows, each concealing an appropriate symbol for each O Antiphon, and an eighth window hiding the Nativity scene. As with an Advent calendar, one window is opened each day. (Suggested symbols appear below.)

**O WISDOM**, who came from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end and ordering all things mightily and sweetly: Come, and teach us the way of prudence.

*Sirach 24:2; Wisdom 8:1. Symbols: oil lamp, open book.*

**O LORD AND RULER** of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the flame of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come, and redeem us with outstretched arm.

*Exodus 3:2, 20:1. Symbols: burning bush, stone tablets.*

**O ROOT OF JESSE**, who stands for an ensign of the people, before whom kings shall keep silence and unto whom the Gentiles shall make supplication: Come to deliver us, and tarry not.

*Isaiah 11:1-3, 10. Symbol: vine or plant in flower, especially a rose.*

**O KEY OF DAVID**, and Scepter of the House of Israel, who opens and no man shuts, who shuts and no man opens: Come, and bring forth the captive from his prison, he who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death.

*Isaiah 22:22. Symbols: key, broken chains.*

**O DAWN OF THE EAST**, brightness of the light eternal, and Sun of Justice: Come, and enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

*Psalms 19:6-7. Symbol: rising sun.*

**O KING OF ALL NATIONS** and their desired One, the Cornerstone that makes both one: Come, and deliver man, whom You formed out of the dust of the earth.

*Psalms 2:7-8, Ephesians 2:14-20. Symbols: crown, scepter.*

**O EMMANUEL**, God with us, our King and Lawgiver, the expected of the nations and their Savior: Come to save us, O Lord our God.

*Isaiah 7:14; 33:22. Symbols: tablets of stone; chalice and host.*



The Christmas Novena may be printed and distributed for personal, small group, and parish use. For other uses please contact us.

Scripture from the Revised Standard Version—Catholic Edition  
Adapted from *Celebrating Advent and Christmas —  
A Sourcebook for Families*  
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## For Family Devotions