

The *O Antiphons* are ancient poems which elaborate on the many names of Christ found in Scripture. There is evidence they were in existence already at the turn of the 6th century CE. They were used regularly in liturgies of evening prayer in monasteries throughout the middle ages.

The O ANTIPHONS

Teaching us hope...

These O Antiphon banners were designed by Lianne Marsh, and created by Lianne Marsh and Barbara Bater for the Parish of St. Mary Magdalene in 2014. Their presence in our building have helped parishioners live the faith of our tradition ever since.

As Isaiah had prophesied:

"The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah 11:2-3)

O Sapientia (O Wisdom)

*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.*



A pathway leads to an open Book (the Bible) which with
Jesus, the Messiah, Incarnate Word, is a source of wisdom,
still open to us today...

As Isaiah had prophesied:

“...but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth... Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.” (Isaiah 11:4-5)

O Adonai
(O Lord)

*O Adonai,
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.*



Lightning strikes on the mountain (Sinai) where the Lord's power and might is shown to the people of Israel and to Moses, both in visible display and in the ten commandments.

The might of the Lord and of God's creation is often seen in the powerful movements of nature.

As Isaiah had prophesied:

“A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” “On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a sign to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.” (Isaiah 11:1 & 10)

O Radix Jesse
(O Root of Jesse)

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



The branch or stem that forms the family tree from Jesse (father of David) to Jesus is depicted by a tree that in form becomes the face of humanity. This face knows the despair of death, yet ultimately receives the light of redemption in the victor's laurel wreath or crown. The victory is available to all branches of humanity that reach for it.

As Isaiah had prophesied:

"I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and no one shall shut; he shall shut, and no one shall open." (Isaiah 22:22)

O Clavis David
(O Key of David)

*O Key of David
and sceptre 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.*



A key rests above an open door as a beacon to walk this life through danger and sorrow. The doorway is a clear opening beyond which we leave behind the difficulties and fears of this life. The key also suggests safety in that the door can be locked against all danger.

As Isaiah had prophesied:

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined." (Isaiah 9:2)

O Oriens
(O Dayspring)

*O Morning Star,
splendour of light eternal
and sun of righteousness:
Come and enlighten those
who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death.*



“Dayspring” or the rising sun brings light to the darkness that overshadows humanity’s sin and experience of death.

So Jesus’ saving light enters the world and drives away the clouds that darken our lives.

As Isaiah had prophesied:

"For a child has been born for us, a son given us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

O Rex Gentium (O King of the Nations)

*O come desire of nations
bind, in one the hearts
of humankind, bid all our
sad divisions cease,
and be for us our
Prince of Peace.*



Two people, be they representatives of individuals, groups, or nations, turn their backs on one another. Hope for the end to all conflict shines in the star above them, the Prince of Peace, drawing all to be drawn together in one Love.

As Isaiah had prophesied:

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

O Emmanuel
(O With Us is God)

*O Emmanuel, our king
and our lawgiver,
the hope of the nations
and their Saviour:
Come and save us,
O Lord our God.*



A woman (Israel) sits lonely and captive behind barbed wire.

Emmanuel (hope for the future) is represented in the star.
All captivity, real or imagined, can look to the light of the star
for its hope.

(Emmanuel means God is with us).