

# ***VENI, VENI, EMMANUEL***

## **Explanation of the Advent Parament**

We read in the chapters of Exodus that man has hoped for a redeemer. Through the ages, prophets have called people to holiness and encouraged them with promises of a coming Messiah – one who would free them from the slavery of sin. Mary, who responded to God’s call, deeply experienced this hope and expectation of Emmanuel. During the first part of Advent, we anticipate Christ’s coming at the end of time. In the latter part of Advent, we prepare for His coming as Man, Son of Mary.

Paraments (from *parare*, to prepare, to decorate) are ecclesiastical vestments and liturgical textiles hanging in or near the Sanctuary. The Advent parament consists of two sets of shawls. The four white shawls hanging in the background are an artistic representation of prophets' shawls. They represent the witness of the ancient prophets calling God’s people to anticipate the coming Savior. The four shawls in the foreground represent Mary’s own growing expectations. The purple wool shawls represent royalty and penance; the rose shawl (*Gaudete* – Rejoice) represents our joy at knowing Christ’s birth is near. As we come closer to the day of *Christ Mass*, the golden threads also increase heralding more boldly the time of fulfillment.

The symbols embroidered on the lower part of the “Prophet Shawls” are found in the hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. The “Great ‘O’ Antiphons” of Advent first appear in manuscripts dated from the eighth or ninth century and are frequently attributed to St. Gregory the Great. They were sung in monasteries during Advent Evening Prayer before and after the *Magnificat* and were inspired by the wisdom and prophetic books. Antiphons are sung in alternation or as a response. Each chanted liturgical text presents a title given to God in the Old Testament, and a petition asking for the fulfillment of a scriptural promise or prophecy. The historical events recounted in the ‘O’ Antiphons are found in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible.

Here are the ‘O’ Antiphons and some scripture references to reflect on during Advent.

<i>O Sapientia</i>	O Wisdom	Mic 6:9, Prov 8 and 10, Gen 1:31
<i>O Adonai</i>	O Lord	Mic 5:2, Ex 3, Mt 1:22, 2:6, Ex 6:3
<i>O Radix Jesse</i>	O Root of Jesse	Is 11:1-4, 10, Rom 11:16, 15:12, Rev 5:5, 22:16, Gen 27:29
<i>O Clavis David</i>	O Key of David	Num 24:17, Ex. 3:1
<i>O Oriens</i>	O Rising Dawn	Hab 3:4, 2 Sam 23:4, Is 14:12
<i>O Rex Gentium</i>	O King of Nations	Ps 47:2
<i>O Emmanuel</i>	O God with Us	Is 7:15, 40, Deut 4:1