



Advent and Christmas Novena

Catholics in many cultures have prayed the Christmas Novena (nine consecutive days of prayer) from December **16-24** as part of their Christmas preparation. Its focus is on our expectation of the coming of Christ and on God's faithfulness to his people throughout the generations. This novena is built around what we usually refer to as the Great Antiphons of Advent, a series of scriptural titles addressed to Christ, the newborn king and the titles given to Christ in Luke's account of the Annunciation. Together they seem to sum up our Advent longing for Jesus Christ, our Savior.

All can pray this novena, either alone or as part of a family group. They can also be added to our daily prayers to give them an Advent flavor.

Each day begin with lighting a candle or the candles on your Advent wreath. A favorite carol or hymn may be sung, such as "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" (see below). If prayed in a group, invite one member to read the short scripture passage aloud, allowing time for reflection before all pray the short prayers that follow.

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel*

*O Come, O Come O Wisdom from on high.
Who orders all things mightily
To us the path of knowledge show
And teach us in her ways to go
Rejoice! Rejoice!
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December 16: Jesus, Wisdom of God

Leader: "After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers". (Lk 2:46-47)

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

All: "Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and shall be forever more."

December 17: Jesus, Lord and Ruler of all

Leader: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. (Ex 20: 2-3)

All: O Lord and ruler of the nations, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave him the law on Mount Sinai: Come and redeem us with our outstretched arm.

All: "Glory to the Father...."

December 18: Jesus, Root of Jesse

Leader: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, a branch that shall grow from its roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall be upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" (Is 11:1-3)

All: O Root of Jesse, the long awaited savior of the Chosen People, before whom kings shall kneel and all shall ask for mercy: Come, make haste and deliver your people.

All: "Glory to the Father...."

December 19: Jesus, Key of David

Leader: "And I will place on his shoulder the key of the House of David; he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open. And he will become a throne of honor to his father's house". (Is 22:22)

All: O Key of David whose life unlocks for us the promise of eternal life: Come and liberate us, free us from the darkness of sin and the shadow of death.

All: "Glory to the Father....."



Christmas Novena (Part Two)

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Rejoice! Rejoice!*

December 20: Jesus, Dawn of the East

Leader: "In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes forth like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the east to the west and there is nothing hid from its heat" (Ps 19:5-7)

All: O Dawn of the East, brightness of the light eternal and Sun of Justice: Come and awaken within us compassion for all who are in need.

All: "Glory to the Father...."

December 21: Jesus, King of the Gentiles

Leader: "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone" (Eph. 2:19-20)

All: O King of Gentiles, the cornerstone that makes all believers one in the household of God: Come and deliver your sons and daughters, whom you have formed from the dust of the earth into the eternal image of God

All: "Glory to the Father"

December 22: Jesus, Emmanuel

Leader: "Therefore the Lord will give you a sign. Behold, a maiden shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel" (Isa 7:14)

All: O Emmanuel, God with us, the long awaited savior: Come and save us, give us once more the joy of your compassion and mercy.

All: "Glory to the Father...."

December 23: Jesus, Son of the Most High

Leader: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Lk 1:32-33)

All: Jesus, Son of the Most High, your birth is the fulfillment of the promises made long ago: Come and empower us to be faithful to our baptismal promises.

All: "Glory to the Father...."

December 24: Jesus, Son of God

Leader: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (Lk 1:35)

All: Jesus, Son of God, you bring healing to those who cry out to you in faith, Come and restore your people that we might shine once more in the glory of your name.

All: "Glory to the Father...."