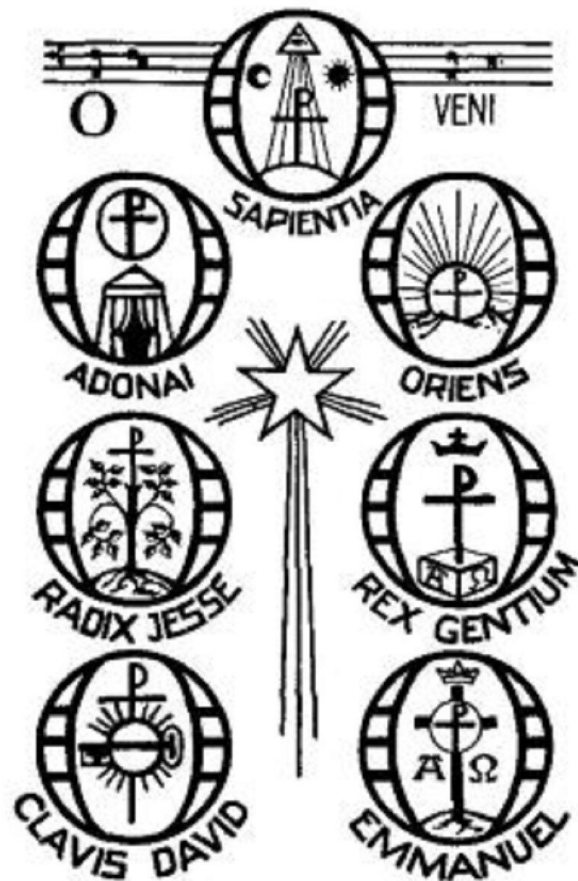


THE HARLING AND GUILTCROSS BENEFICE



ADVENT RETREAT

17th – 23rd December 2024

This Advent, you are invited to join with others throughout the Benefice in prayer and reflection – but from home. At 7pm (if you are able), I invite you to sit somewhere quiet, light a candle, and use the simple form of prayer in this booklet. For each day of the retreat, a Psalm and a Reading from the Bible are given. There is also the opportunity to hear a reflection from the Ministry Team on the Antiphon for that day – simply go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com), search for the Harling and Guiltcross Benefice channel, and you will find the reflection each day.

Our prayer is that, as we draw close to the celebration of our Lord and Saviour being born among us, we will each have little moments of quiet and stillness to reflect on his coming among us; in the manger at Bethlehem, 2000 years ago; at the end of all things, when he shall return in glory; and in every single moment of our lives, as he seeks to be born within the lives of those he loves and calls to hope.

An antiphon is a short verse that is used like a refrain, either repeated at points through another text or to begin and end it. Antiphons are often used in Christian worship, for example, during the singing of psalms.

The ‘O Antiphons’ are the antiphons that are said or sung before and after the Magnificat on the seven days preceding Christmas Eve (17–23 December). They all begin ‘O...’ hence their name. They are known by their Latin titles, for example, ‘O Sapientia...’, is ‘O Wisdom...’

The antiphons use texts from the Bible, both Old and New Testament, that Christians understand to refer to Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. People who do not know the antiphons from Evening Prayer may well know them from the Advent hymn ‘O come, O come, Emmanuel’.

THE O ANTIPHONS

17 December – O Sapientia

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. *cf Ecclesiasticus 24.3; Wisdom 8.1*

18 December – O Adonai

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. *cf Exodus 3.2; 24.12*

19 December – O Radix Jesse

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples;
before you kings will shut their mouths,
to you the nations will make their prayer:

Come and deliver us, and delay no longer. *cf Isaiah 11.10; 45.14; 52.15;*
Romans 15.12

20 December – O Clavis 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. *cf Isaiah 22.22; 42.7*

21 December – O Oriens

O Morning Star,
splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness:

Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death. *cf Malachi 4.2*

22 December – O Rex Gentium

O King of the nations, and their desire,
the cornerstone making both one:

Come and save the human race,

which you fashioned from clay. *cf Isaiah 28.16; Ephesians 2.14*

23 December – O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel, our King and our lawgiver,
the hope of the nations and their Saviour:

Come and save us, O Lord our God. *cf Isaiah 7.14*

Daily Prayer During Advent

PREPARATION

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Your words have I hidden within my heart,
that I should not sin against you.

PRAISE

Saviour eternal, life of the world unfailing,
light everlasting and our true redemption.

Taking our humanity in your loving freedom,
you rescued our lost earth and filled the world with joy.

By your first advent justify us, by your second, set us free:
that when the great light dawns and you come as judge of all,
we may be robed in immortality and ready, Lord,
to follow in your footsteps blest, wherever they may lead.

Salus Aeterna

THE WORD OF GOD

PSALMODY

December 17 th	Psalm 50
December 18 th	Psalm 82
December 19 th	Psalm 57
December 20 th	Psalm 4
December 21 st	Psalm 84
December 22 nd	Psalm 123
December 23 rd	Psalm 89.1-37

READING

December 17 th	Revelation 22.17,20,21
December 18 th	Isaiah 11.1-4
December 19 th	Mark 1.1-5
December 20 th	Luke 12.35-37
December 21 st	Mark 13.34-end
December 22 nd	Romans 13.11-end
December 23 rd	Luke 1.35,38

REFLECTION

Please go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search for the Harling and Guiltcross Benefice Channel, for each day's reflection.

PRAYERS

Prayers may include these concerns:

- *the Church, that she may be ready for the coming of Christ*
- *the leaders of the Church*
- *the nations, that they may be subject to the rule of God*
- *those who are working for justice in the world*
- *the broken, that they may find God's healing*

Then pray the Antiphon for the day (found at the beginning of this pamphlet) followed by:

Keep us, O Lord, while we tarry on this earth, in a serious seeking after you, and in an affectionate walking with you, every day of our lives; that when you come, we may be found not hiding our talent, nor serving the flesh, nor yet asleep with our lamp unfurnished, but waiting and longing for our Lord, our glorious God for ever. Amen.

Followed by the Lord's Prayer.

THE CONCLUSION

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory. Amen.

