



St. Rita News

The new monthly newsletter serving Saint Rita Parish

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Catholic Traditions and Devotions What are the “O Antiphons”?

The “O Antiphons” are the seven antiphons recited or chanted before the Magnificat during the Vespers of the Liturgy of the Hours during the Octave before Christmas (that is, December 17-23). Their origin is unknown, but by the 8th and 9th centuries they were in wide use by the Church in Rome and in European monastic communities during evening Advent services. Each one highlights a title for the Messiah, and refers to a prophecy of Isaiah. Together, they also form the basis for the 19th century Advent hymn “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” which is still popular today. Besides being sung during Vespers, they can also be incorporated into family advent wreath prayers or Jesse Tree devotions on the appropriate days.

The Antiphons are:

O Sapientia (Wisdom), December 17th: “O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care. Come and show your people the way to salvation.” (See Isaiah 11:2-3, 28:29.)

O Adonai (Lord), December 18th: “O sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come, stretch out your mighty hand to set us free.” (See Isaiah 11:4-5, 33:22.)



O Radix Jesse (Root of Jesse), December 19th: “O Flower of Jesse’s stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid.” (See Isaiah 11:1, 11:10.)

O Clavis David (Key of David), December 20th: “O Key of David, O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of Heaven: Come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom.” (See Isaiah 22:22, and also 9:6.)

O Oriens (Rising Sun), December 21st: “O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.” (See Isaiah 9:1.)

O Rex Gentium (King of the Nations), December 22nd: “O King of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart; O Keystone of the mighty arch of man, come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust.” (See Isaiah 9:5, and also 2:4.)

O Emmanuel, December 23rd: “O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God.” (See Isaiah 7:14.)

■ EVENTS IN OUR DIOCESE

The Blessed John Paul II Shrine presents “**Christmas Across Africa: An Exhibition of African Nativities**” now until Feb. 2. Free parking and admission. Open daily Mon-Sat 10-5 and Sun 12-5; closed Christmas Day. www.jp2shrine.org

Saint Michael Catholic Church (7401 St. Michael's Lane) in Annandale, Virginia will host an **Advent Concert with Charles (Chuckie) Ibay** at 7pm on Sunday, Dec. 23. All are invited to this free event.

The Diocesan Young Adult Ministry is partnering with Catholic Charities Senior Services to **fight the poverty of loneliness this Advent season!** Young Adults will travel

(in pairs) to the homes of the elderly of St. Philip's in Falls Church and help decorate Christmas trees, write Christmas cards, rake leaves, etc. Meet on Saturday, Dec. 15 at St. Philip's for 9am mass, then help the seniors, and conclude with lunch at 12:30pm. Contact Erin at (703) 841-2549 or yam@arlingtondiocese.org

Advent Lecture Series from the Dominican Student Brothers of the Province of St. Joseph on “The Four Last Things.” Lecture topics are “Judgment” on Dec. 9, “Heaven” on Dec. 16, and “Hell” on Dec. 23. The Dominican House of Studies in NE Washington DC. See <http://www.dhspriority.org> for more information.

American Heritage Girls VA1381: A Patriotic Group!



In observance of Veteran's Day on November 12th, members of our St. Rita American Heritage Girls troop ventured over to the Mount Vernon Rec Center to the Rocky Versace Memorial event. The girls were invited to lead the Pledge of Allegiance for those in attendance who came to hear the names of all 67 veterans from Alexandria who died in the Viet Nam war and to remember Capt. Rocky Versace, a former St. Rita

parishioner. Fr. Gee led the invocation and closing prayer, and the St. Rita Advanced Strings ensemble played the National Anthem and other patriotic hymns. The whole St. Rita community can be proud to be so well represented at this community event!

Looking forward to December, our AHG troops plans two more service activities: First we will visit Envoy nursing home to spend time in song and crafts with our older friends on Friday, the 14th. The next day we will gather at our local Alexandria National Cemetery while volunteers at national cemeteries across our nation will lay wreaths on the graves of our fallen veterans. This national wreath laying day is organized by Wreaths Across America, a group of patriotic volunteers whose mission is to honor fallen service members, beginning at Arlington



National Cemetery, but now reaching many, many other locations. We are very excited to serve our local community here in Alexandria on December 15th, assisting in covering each grave with a beautiful Christmas wreath. All are welcome...won't you join us? For more information or to sponsor a wreath, contact Stephanie Rosales (stephrosales@comcast.net) or visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org (choose Alexandria National Cemetery and VAAHG1381).

■ LIVING OUR FAITH

Prayer Intention

Please pray for the young men and women in our parish who are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in February.



Baptisms at St. Rita

- + Ryan Sebin Donahoe, Nov. 3
- + Isabel Joan Martorana, Nov. 3
- + Ronan Terrence Kee, Nov. 11
- + Elizabeth Jeanne McKinney, Nov. 11
- + Anais Rivera, Nov. 24
- + Danny Josue Ortiz-Osonio, Nov. 24
- + Valentine R. Cabrera-Ramirez, Nov. 24

Funerals at St. Rita

+ Walter Umstead, Funeral Mass on 11/13



Weddings at St. Rita

+ Anthony Angelo Themak & Tracy Lynn Anderson, Nov. 17

Do you know of a parishioner who is ill, and in need of prayers? Or a parishioner who is serving in the armed forces, overseas? We will be happy to publish their names so that fellow parishioners can pray for them.

Please contact Catherine Feil (catherine.feil@gmail.com, or 703.671.0402) or Erin Church (erinmchurch@gmail.com).

Do you have ideas for future items in the parish newsletter, or would you like to submit a feature for publication? Is there an upcoming event of interest to St. Rita's parishioners that we should know about? All submissions can be directed to our editors: Catherine Feil (catherine.feil@gmail.com, or 703.671.0402) or Erin Church (erinmchurch@gmail.com). *Thank you!*