



# Hasten the Kingdom: Praying the O Antiphons of Advent (Advent/Christmas)

*Mary Winifred CHS*

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The ancient traditions of the early Church provide a wealth of material for prayer and meditation in the final days of Advent. During this time of waiting, watching, and preparation we invite God into our lives. One way to pray for God's coming is to use the ancient prayers of the Church combined with a present-day understanding of what Christ's coming means for us. *Hasten the Kingdom* invites those who wish to recover the meaning of Advent to do so with the ancient O Antiphons - through moments of prayer, silence, and meditation. The Great Os" - short devotional texts chanted before and after a psalm or canticle - are sung before and after the Magnificat, the Song of Mary, at Vespers from December 16-23. Each of the antiphons welcomes the Messiah and ends with a petition of hope.

*Hasten the Kingdom* is organized in prayer service form for use by individuals or groups. It offers the wisdom of these traditional prayers and readings, along with Sister Winifred's own serene meditations and poems. When used by study groups all members are encouraged to take part by sharing responsibilities for the readings and contributing personal reflections.

Sister Winifred offers these meditations based on the O Antiphons, together with their scriptural texts, so that we can move through the last days of Advent with joy and hope.

*Mary Winifred, CHS, was for many years a member of the Community of the Holy Spirit. She is founding sister of the Community of the Ascension and now lives and works in Cambridge, Maryland, in the Episcopal Diocese of Easton. She is the author of many articles and reviews and is the co-author of Using the Twelve Steps to Grow Spiritually: A Guide for Women.*

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