

Christmas Novena

A sung novena in preparation for Christmas



THE OBLATES OF ST. JOSEPH
"Serving Jesus in imitation of St. Joseph..."
<http://osjoseph.org>



Oblates of St. Joseph, California, U.S.A.

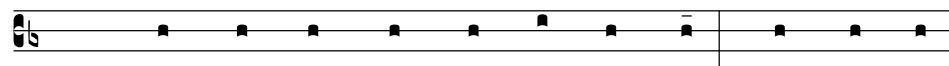
Final Prayer

Leader: Come quickly, we pray, Lord Jesus,
and do not delay,
that those who find trust in your compassion
may find solace and relief in your coming.
Who live and reign with God the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

If a priest or deacon is presiding, then after the prayer he may impart a blessing over the people. The novena concludes with the chanting of Psalm 150.

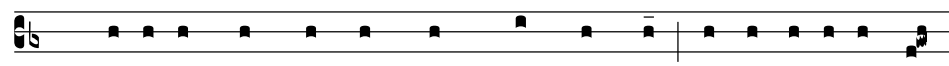
Psalm 150



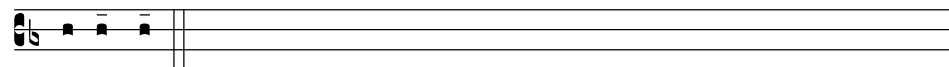
Leader: Praise the Lord in his sanc- tua- ry, Praise him in
A: Praise Him for his migh- ty deeds, Praise him for
B: Praise Him with blast of trum- pet, Praise him with
A: Praise Him with tim- brel and dance Praise him with
B: Praise Him with sound- ing cym- bals, Praise him with



the fir- ma- ment of his strength.
his sov- reign maj- es- ty.
ly- re and harp.
with strings and pipe.
clang- ing cym- bals.



All: Let everything that has breath praise the Lord, for un-to us is born



a Savior.

All repeat the antiphon:



All: Christ the Lord has come to us through Mary, Al-le-lu-ia.

All repeat the antiphon of the day together:

Ant 16 Dec: All you who love Jerusalem,
rejoice with her for ever.

Ant 17 Dec: 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.

Ant 18 Dec: 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.

Ant 19 Dec: 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.

Ant 20 Dec: 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.

Ant 21 Dec: O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

Ant 22 Dec: 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 creatures you fashioned from the dust.

Ant 23 Dec: O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, †
desire of the nations, Savior of all people,
come and set us free, Lord our God.

Ant 24 Dec: When the sun rises in the morning sky, †
you will see the King of kings coming forth from the Father
like a radiant bridegroom from the bridal chamber.

Introduction

The sung Christmas novena has a long tradition in the Catholic Church, dating back to the early seventeenth century. The form in this booklet can be traced to Carlo Antonio Vacchetta, an Italian Vincentian who taught liturgy and chant to seminarians. It was spread by popular devotion first by the Vincentians throughout Italy. Later it gained popularity among the Salesians, and was celebrated solemnly also by the Oblates of St. Joseph in the same geographical region and epoch. In the twentieth century, the faithful in Italy were known to flock to Oblate parishes in the days leading up to Christmas because of their devout and solemn observance of the novena. The solemn celebration of the novena continues down to our day.

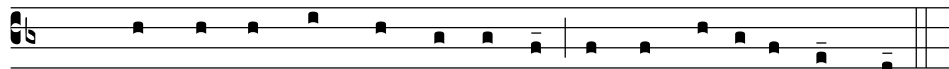
The novena is loosely patterned after the pre-Vatican II form of Vespers. It begins with a response (*Regem venturum Dominum...*, taken from the invitory of Advent season) that accompanies various passages adapted from the prophets and the Church's liturgy announcing the coming of the Messiah. These prophecies are followed by a reading from scripture and a short responsory. The hymn *En clara vox* is intoned by all, and followed by another responsory. The most solemn part of the novena is the chanting of the Magnificat, accompanied by the major antiphons of Advent (the "O Antiphons") between December 17 and December 23 inclusive. Each day the novena concludes with a final prayer and a psalm of praise.

The Oblates of St. Joseph are blessed to be able to continue this revered tradition of their Congregation and to share it with the faithful where they live and work. May your own observance of this beautiful novena bear great fruit in your life and help you prepare well for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The novena may begin with the sign of the cross and a brief greeting if this has not already preceded it.

The Prophecies

The leader begins by chanting the antiphon alone. It is repeated together by all. Then the first choir (Side A) chants the first verse, followed by all repeating the antiphon. The subsequent verses and antiphons are sung in the same manner.



Leader: The birth of Christ the Lord is near, O come let us a-dore him.

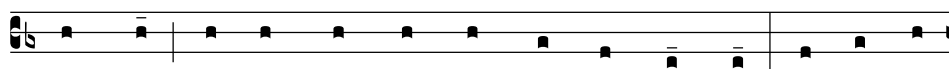
All: The birth of Christ the Lord is near, O come let us a-dore him.



A: Rejoice, O daughter of Zion, and cry for joy O daughter of Jer-u-



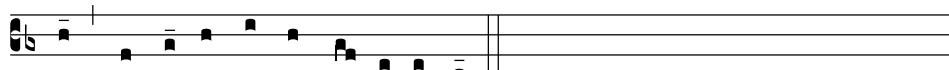
salem: Behold the Lord shall come, and on that day there shall be a



great light, and the mountains shall pour out sweetness; and the hills



shall flow with milk and honey; For the great prophet will at last ap-



pear, and re-es-tablish Jer- u-salem.

All repeat the antiphon:

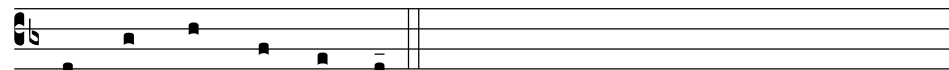


All: The birth of Christ the Lord is near, O come let us adore him.



A: He stret- ches forth his arm to do his will, and scat- ters far

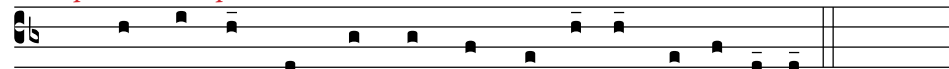
B: He drives the men of pow-er from their thrones and rais- es up



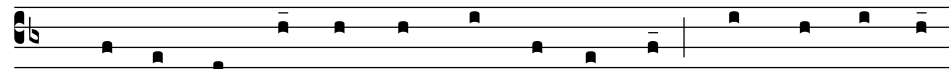
in flight the proud of heart.

the poor and low ly ones.

All repeat the antiphon:

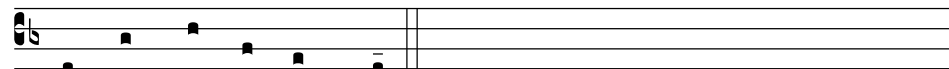


All: Blest are you who bore our God and Savior, Ho-ly Mary.



A: He fills with gifts all those who lack for food; sends off the rich

B: He has ac- cep- ted Is- ra- el his slave, with mer- cy kept



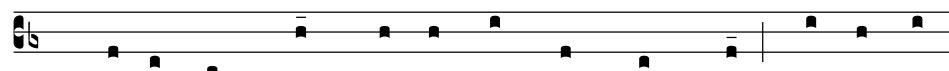
with no- thing in their hands.

his pro- mis- es of old.

All repeat the antiphon:

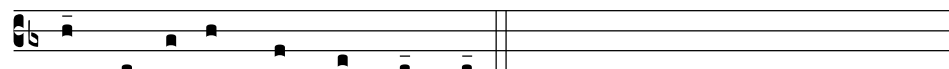


All: Wondrous things are done in you, O Mary, Al-le-lu-ia.



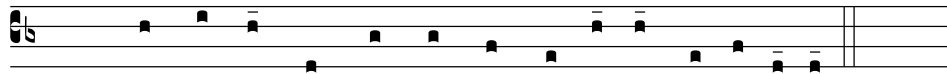
All: As he had pledged our fa- thers he would do; to A- bra-

All: To Fa- ther, Son and Pa- ra- clete give praise now, al- ways



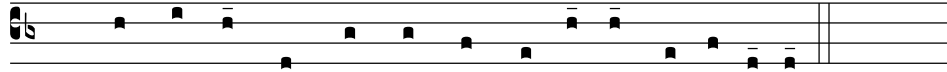
ham and to his sons for- e- ver.

and for- e-ver-more, A- men.

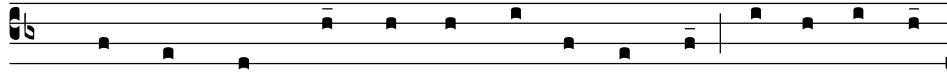


Leader: Blest are you who bore our God and Savior, Ho-ly Mary.

All repeat the antiphon:



All: Blest are you who bore our God and Savior, Ho-ly Mary.



A: My soul sings songs of praise un- to the Lord; my spi- rit leaps

B: Be-cause he smiled u- pon his low- ly maid: all gen- er a



for joy in God my Sa- vior.

tions hence shall call me blest.

All repeat the antiphon:



All: Wondrous things are done in you, O Mary, Al-le-lu-ia.



A: For he has worked in me full wond-rous things; the migh- ty

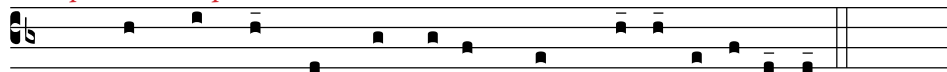
B: His mer- cy streams from ev'- ry age to age on those who



One, and ho- ly is his name.

hold his name in re-ver- ence.

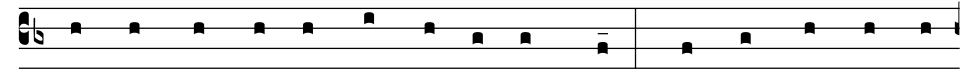
All repeat the antiphon:



All: Christ the Lord has come to us through Mary, Al-le-lu-ia.



B: Behold, the God made man shall a-rise from the house of David



to claim his rightful place up-on the throne, and you shall see him



and your hearts shall cry out in ex-ul-tation.

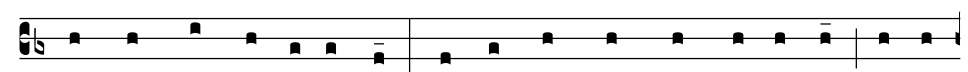
All repeat the antiphon:



All: The birth of Christ the Lord is near, O come let us adore him.



A: Behold, the Lord protector, the Ho-ly One of Is-ra-el shall come



with the splendor of a king, and he shall rule from sea to sea, e-ven



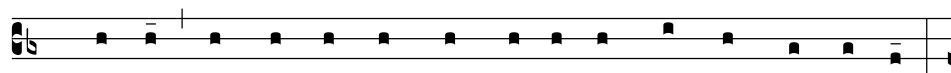
to the farthest boundaries of the u-niverse.

All repeat the antiphon:

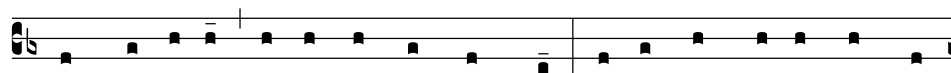


All: The birth of Christ the Lord is near, O come let us adore him.

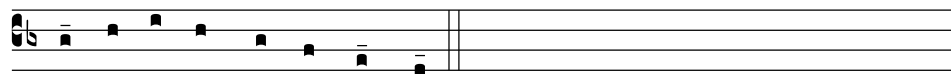




B: Behold, the Lord of truth and beauty and goodness shall appear;

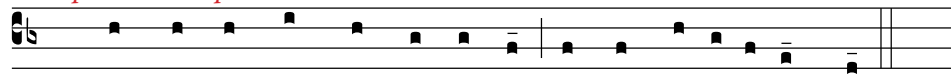


should he delay, a-bandon not your trust, for he shall surely come sur-

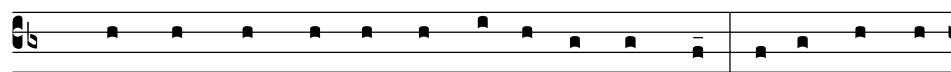


passing all our deepest longings.

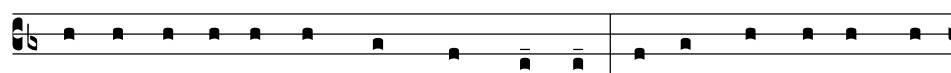
All repeat the antiphon:



All: The birth of Christ the Lord is near, O come let us adore him.



A: The Lord shall descend like rain u-pon the fields; in his time the

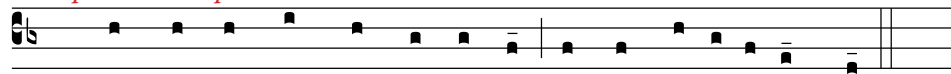


fullness of justice and peace shall flourish; all the kings of the earth



shall worship him, all nations of the earth shall serve him.

All repeat the antiphon:



All: The birth of Christ the Lord is near, O come let us adore him.



B: For un-to us a child shall be born, and shall be called the mighty

Magnificat

The Magnificat begins by the leader chanting the major antiphon of the day. The leader then sings the first minor antiphon, which is repeated by all. Each choir alternates with a verse which is followed by a minor antiphon sung by all. At the end, all repeat the major antiphon of the day.

Ant 16 Dec: All you who love Jerusalem, rejoice with her for ever.

Ant 17 Dec: 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.

Ant 18 Dec: 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.

Ant 19 Dec: 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.

Ant 20 Dec: 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.

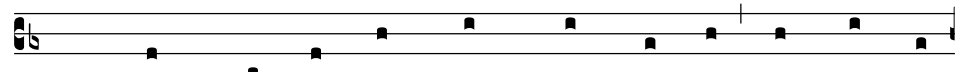
Ant 21 Dec: O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:
come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

Ant 22 Dec: 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 creatures you fashioned from the dust.

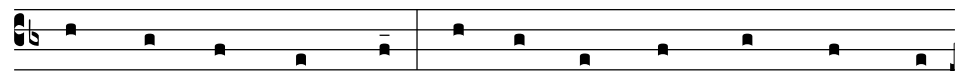
Ant 23 Dec: O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, †
desire of the nations, Savior of all people,
come and set us free, Lord our God.

Ant 24 Dec: When the sun rises in the morning sky, †
you will see the King of kings coming forth from the Father
like a radiant bridegroom from the bridal chamber.

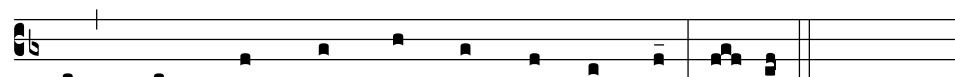
Hymn



A: Be- hold a voice breaks through the dark; It seems to
 B: Now let the sloth- ful soul a- rise, No long- er
 A: Be- hold the Lamb is sent to us, To free- ly
 B: Thus when at last He comes a- gain, And all the
 All: Strength, hon- or, praise and glo- ry be, To God the



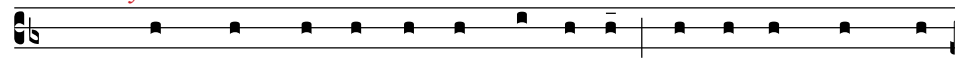
say the Lord is near. O cast a- way the dreams of
 bound by earth- ly ties; A new sun shines; it is the
 pay the debt we owe; Let each ap- proach Him full con-
 earth in fear bows down; He shall for us a champ- pion
 Fa- ther and the Son; To- geth- er with the Pa- ra-



night; Christ bursts forth as the light of day.
 Christ, Who shall re- move all trace of sin.
 trite And seek the par- don He be- stows.
 be And not a fear ful judge of sin.
 clete Who reigns for- e- ver, Three in One. A men.

Responsory

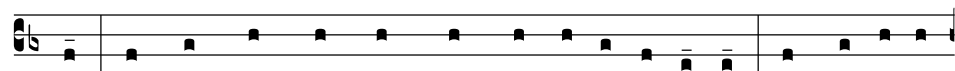
The leader chants the first half of the resposory alone. Then all repeat together the second half.



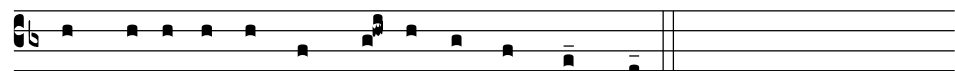
Leader: Drop down dew ye heavens from above, and let the clouds rain



the just. All: Let the earth be opened and bud forth the Savior.



God. He shall rule from the throne of David his father, the power of



whose lin- e- age he shall bear u- pon his shoulders.

All repeat the antiphon:

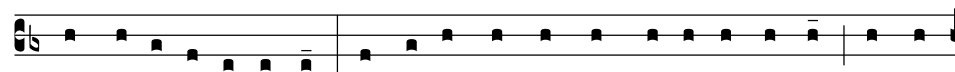


All: The birth of Christ the Lord is near, O come let us adore him.

The following verse and antiphon are sung only on December 24th. Both choirs (Side A and Side B) chant the verse together.



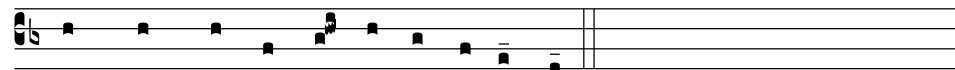
All: Bethlehem! E- lected ci- ty of the Most High! Out of you shall come



the Ruler of Is- ra- el. His beginning is from all e- ter- ni- ty; his glo-

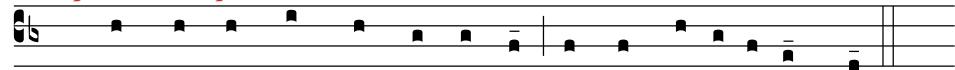


ry shall be man- i- fest throughout the u- niverse, and at his coming a



great peace shall descend u- pon all nations.

All repeat the antiphon:



All: The birth of Christ the Lord is near, O come let us adore him.

The Readings

December 16 ISAIAH 61:11

As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up,
So will the Lord God make justice and praise spring up before all the nations.

Leader: Come, Lord, do not delay.

All: Free your people from their sinfulness.

December 17 1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-24

May the God of peace make you perfect in holiness. May he preserve you
whole and entire, spirit, soul, and body, irreproachable at the coming of our
Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls us is trustworthy, therefore he will do it.

Leader: The nations will revere your name, O Lord.

All: And the great ones of the earth will acknowledge your glory.

December 18 PHILIPPIANS 4:4-5

Rejoice in the Lord always! I say it again. Rejoice! Everyone should see how
unselfish you are. The Lord is near.

Leader: Your light will come, Jerusalem; the Lord will dawn on you in radiant
beauty.

All: You will see his glory within you.

December 19 PHILIPPIANS 3:20B-21

We eagerly await the coming of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will give
a new form to this lowly body of ours and remake it according to the pattern
of his glorified body, by his power to subject everything to himself.

Leader: The nations will revere your name, O Lord.

All: And the great ones of the earth will acknowledge your glory.

December 20 SEE 1 CORINTHIANS 1:7B-9

We await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will strengthen us to
the end, so that we will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God
is faithful, and it was he who called us to fellowship with his Son.

Leader: Remember us, Lord, because of the love you have for your people.

All: Come and bring us your salvation.

December 21 1 CORINTHIANS 4:5

Stop passing judgment before the time of the Lord's return. He will bring to
light what is hidden in darkness and manifest the intentions of hearts. At that
time everyone will receive his praise from God.

Leader: The nations will revere your name, O Lord.

All: And the great ones of the earth will acknowledge your glory.

December 22 JAMES 5:7-8,9B

Be patient, my brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer
awaits the precious yield of the soil. He looks forward to it patiently while the
soil receives the winter and the spring rains. You, too, must be patient. Steady
your hearts, because the coming of the Lord is at hand. See! The judge stands
at the gate.

Leader: Come and set us free, Lord God of power and might.

All: Let your face shine upon us and we shall be saved.

December 23 2 PETER 3:8B-9

In the Lord's eyes, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years are as
a day. The Lord does not delay in keeping his promise—though some con-
sider it "delay." Rather, he shows you generous patience, since he wants none
to perish but all to come to repentance.

Leader: Remember us, Lord, because of the love you have for your people.

All: Come and bring us your salvation.

December 24 GALATIANS 4:4-5

When the designated time had come, God sent forth his Son born of a wom-
an, born under the law, to deliver from the law those who were subjected to
it, so that we might receive our status as adopted sons.

Leader: Tomorrow will be the day of your salvation; the sinfulness of the
earth will be destroyed.

All: The Savior of the world will be our King.

