SCIAF
Uniting for a just world
Caritas Scotland



Yasmine, Gaza

THE O ANTIPHONS

Seven days of prayer during Advent
17–23 December 2026

ADVENT IS A SEASON OF WAITING FOR CHRIST TO COME AMONG US.

In Jesus, God does not remain distant from our world or from human suffering. He comes among us as a vulnerable child. Soon after His birth, the Holy Family themselves knew fear and flight, forced to leave home and seek safety in Egypt.

Today, millions of people are living with the uncertainty of displacement – separated from homes, communities and livelihoods, often longing simply to return home.

As we wait for Emmanuel – God with us – we remember them in prayer.

HOW TO USE THESE PRAYERS

In the final days of Advent, the Church prays seven ancient prayers known as the O Antiphons. Each calls upon Christ by a different name drawn from Scripture and asks Him to come among us.

Take a little time each day to read and pray the O Antiphons.

Read the Scripture slowly, spend a moment with the reflection, and bring to mind all those who are displaced in our world today.



O WISDOM

17th Dec

O Wisdom, come and teach us the way of wisdom.

"She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and she orders all things well."
Wisdom 8:1

When we hear about millions of people forced from their homes, the scale can feel overwhelming. But every statistic is a story of our brothers and sisters: parents trying to keep their children safe and families longing to return home.

Christ, the Wisdom of God, teaches us to look beyond numbers and recognise the immeasurable dignity of every person as part of one human family.

Let us pray
O Wisdom, teach us to see as You see. Open our hearts to people forced from their homes and guide us to respond with compassion and generosity.
Come, Lord Jesus, come among us.
Amen

O LORD

18th Dec

O Lord, come and set us free.

"I have surely seen the affliction of my people… and have heard their cry."
Exodus 3:7

God hears the cry of His people. He is not indifferent to fear, violence, or injustice.

Today, families are fleeing conflict, persecution, hunger and disaster, uncertain where they will find safety or what tomorrow will bring.

As we wait for Christ, let us listen to the voices of our brothers and sisters forced from home.

Let us pray
O Lord, hear the cries of all who are afraid or displaced. Protect those seeking safety and give courage to all who work for justice and peace.
Come, Lord Jesus, come among us.
Amen

O ROOT OF JESSE

19th Dec

O Root of Jesse, come and save us.

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit."
Isaiah 11:1

Roots remind us of home, family, and belonging. For people forced to flee, displacement can mean leaving behind a home, community, livelihood and everything familiar. Most people do not long for a new life somewhere else; they long for the day when they can safely return home.

Christ, the root of Jesse, comes to gather us into one human family, where everyone belongs.

Let us pray
O Root of Jesse, be close to all who have been uprooted. Keep alive their hope of safety, home, and belonging, and help us to welcome one another as brothers and sisters.
Come, Lord Jesus, come among us.
Amen



O KEY OF DAVID

20th Dec

O Key of David, come and open the way to freedom.

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me."
Matthew 25:35

A locked door can mean danger. An open door can mean shelter, safety, and welcome. With your generosity, and through our local Church partners, we support people facing displacement with practical help including shelter, food, clean water, healthcare, and emotional support.

As we prepare to welcome Christ, may our hearts be open to those searching for safety.

Let us pray
O Key of David, open doors of safety and hope for all who need refuge. Open our hearts too, so that we may welcome others with compassion and generosity.
Come, Lord Jesus, come among us.
Amen

O RADIANT DAWN

21st Dec

O Radiant Dawn, come and shine on those who dwell in darkness.

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."
Isaiah 9:2

For people living through conflict and displacement, darkness can feel never ending: fear for loved ones, nights without proper shelter, uncertainty about what tomorrow will bring.

Christ comes as light in the darkness – not pretending suffering does not exist, but bringing His presence into its midst.

Let us pray
O Radiant Dawn, bring Your light to all who feel afraid, alone, or without hope. Be especially close to families facing cold, hunger and uncertainty tonight.
Come, Lord Jesus, come among us.
Amen

O KING OF NATIONS

22nd Dec

O King of Nations, come and bring us peace.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace..."
Luke 2:14

We long for peace: peace for everyone living through war, peace for communities divided by violence and hatred, and a place of peace for those forced from their homes.

Christ's peace calls us beyond indifference. It asks us to build a world where every person is treated with respect and has their dignity upheld.

Let us pray
O King of Nations, bring peace where there is conflict and reconciliation where there is division. Make us people of justice, compassion, and peace.
Come, Lord Jesus, come among us.
Amen

O EMMANUEL

23rd Dec

O Emmanuel, our God and Saviour, come and be with us.

"'They shall call his name Emmanuel', (which means, God with us)."
Matthew 1:23

For six days we have prayed: Come, Lord Jesus, come among us.

Today we call Christ Emmanuel – God is with us.

This is the mystery at the heart of Christmas: God chooses to enter our world not through power or privilege, but in vulnerability. In Christ, He comes among us and draws close to all who live with fear, loss and displacement.

God does not remain distant from human suffering.

He is with us.
And because God comes among us in Christ, we are called to be present to one another.

Let us pray
Emmanuel, God with us,
be close to all who are far from home,
all who are afraid,
and all who long for safety and shelter.
Help us to recognise the dignity
of every person we encounter.
As we prepare for You to come among us,
may we respond by drawing near to others
through our prayer, solidarity and generosity.
Emmanuel,
God is with us.
Amen.

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