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SALESIAN PRESS  
2851 Salesian Avenue  
Richmond, California 94804

**Christmas Novena in Chant**

**Christmas**

**Novena**

**in**

**Chant**

Translated from the Latin *Editio Vaticana*  
by Marcel Savard, S.D.B., and Roger Luna, S.D.B.

## FOREWORD

This *Christmas Novena in Chant* is an English translation and adaptation of a Latin original composed by Father Charles Vachetta, C.M., in 1721. Fr. Vachetta's novena became very popular in Northern Italy, where it was composed, and quickly spread to other parts of the world. Eventually, several slightly varying versions appeared. In making this English edition, the translators used a Latin version according to the *Editio Vaticana*.

Most of the materials found in the Christmas novena were originally taken from the liturgy of Advent, from the Roman Breviary and Missal. Ultimately, however, most of the materials in the breviary and missal were themselves taken from the Sacred Scriptures.

The rite or ceremonial of the novena varies according to local custom. One practice is to follow basically the rules for the singing of Vespers. The priest presides at the *sedilia*, goes to the pulpit for the Scripture Reading or Sermonette, and incenses the altar at the *Magnificat*. The service is then concluded with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Another practice is to expose the Blessed Sacrament at the beginning of the service, sing the novena, and conclude with Benediction.

In our age, when the festival of Christmas has been overcommercialized and paganized, this *Christmas Novena in Chant* will help the faithful to prepare spiritually for the coming of Christ. Furthermore, the scriptural character of the novena service will deepen their knowledge and appreciation of Christ, the central, dominant figure in the Scriptures.

Imprimi Potest: Bernard Tohill, S.D.B., Provincial  
Nihil Obstat: James E. O'Neill, Censor Librorum  
Imprimatur: †Floyd L. Begin, Bishop of Oakland

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## PRELUDE

The world had long waited for a Savior. God's chosen people had yearned for Him: the Prophets, John in the desert, and the Virgin Mary.

He came...and tarried with us from Christmas until the Ascension.

Everyday, He comes again into our hearts, with His redeeming Grace.

He shall return for the final Judgement and day of triumph, when we shall be assumed into His glory.

Thus the mystery of Advent is threefold: it is a time of waiting, a time of watching, a time of expectant joy. It is a time of reaching out for Christ, which attains its climax in the nine days preceding Christmas. The seasonal prayer of the Church is full of ardent appeals to Christ to hasten His coming.

This *Christmas Novena in Chant*, culled from the Advent Office, will help you to enter more deeply and more fully into the expectation of Mary and the Church, Mystical Bride of Christ, watching in the night for His long-desired coming.

## PRAYER

God,  
who make us rejoice in the yearly anticipation  
of our redemption,

grant  
that we who welcome with joy your Beloved Son  
as our Redeemer,  
may behold Him without fear, coming  
as our Judge,

Our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,  
who lives and reigns one with you and the Holy Spirit,  
ages without end.

Amen.

# I THE PROPHETIC SONG

Long ago, the prophets told in glowing imagery the splendors of God's Kingdom in the new Jerusalem, the Church. Sing with them the wonders of Christ's Coming.

## Chanters



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

## Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

## Chanters



1. Break out in song, daughter of Si-on, and: sing for boundless joy,



daughter of Je-ru-sa-lem; for He comes, your lord and master,



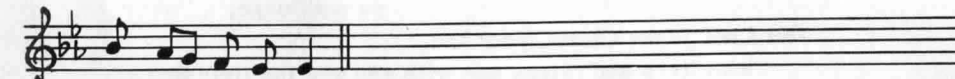
and the day shall gleam with a radiant splendor: and mountains



distill sweet new wine; hills shall flow with milk and honey, for



now comes the long-awaited Prophet, and then shall He re-build



you, Je-ru-sa-lem.

## Congregation

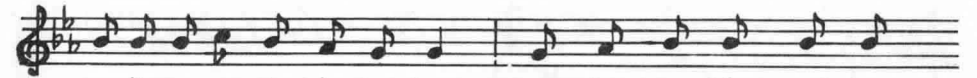


The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

## Chanters



2. He shall be both God and man, and come from David's house



to sit up-on His king-ly throne, you shall see Him, and in



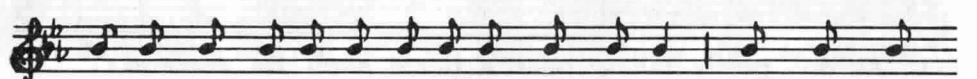
your hearts re-joice greatly.

## Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

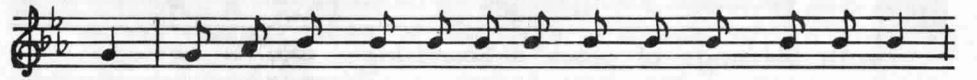
## Chanters



3. Be-hold, the Ho-ly One of Israel shall appear, God, our shield



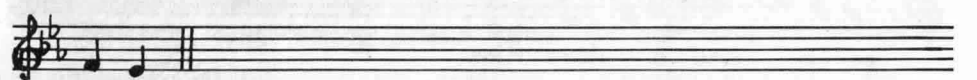
and strength, and the di-a-dem of kings shall rest up-on His



brow; His do-main shall encompass the land from sea to sea,

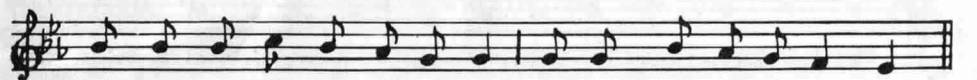


and from the riv-er e-ven un-to the earth's most re-mote



li-mits.

## Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

Chanters



4. Be-hold, the Lord indeed shall appear, and His word shall nev-er fail; though He tarry a-while, keep a wakeful watch for swift and sud-den shall be His com-ing.

Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

Chanters



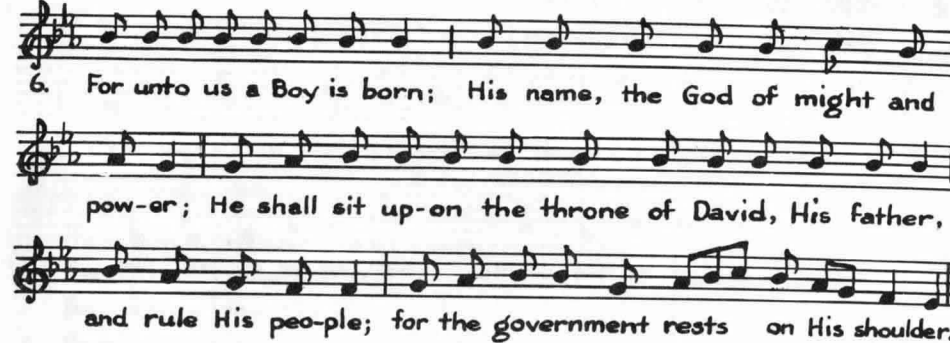
5. As dew gently falling upon a fleece shall He descend; in the days of the Lord shall righteousness again prevail with blessings of peace e-bound-ing; and in homage shall all the kings and princes of the land, all the nations serve and a-dore Him.

Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come let us a-dore Him.

Chanters



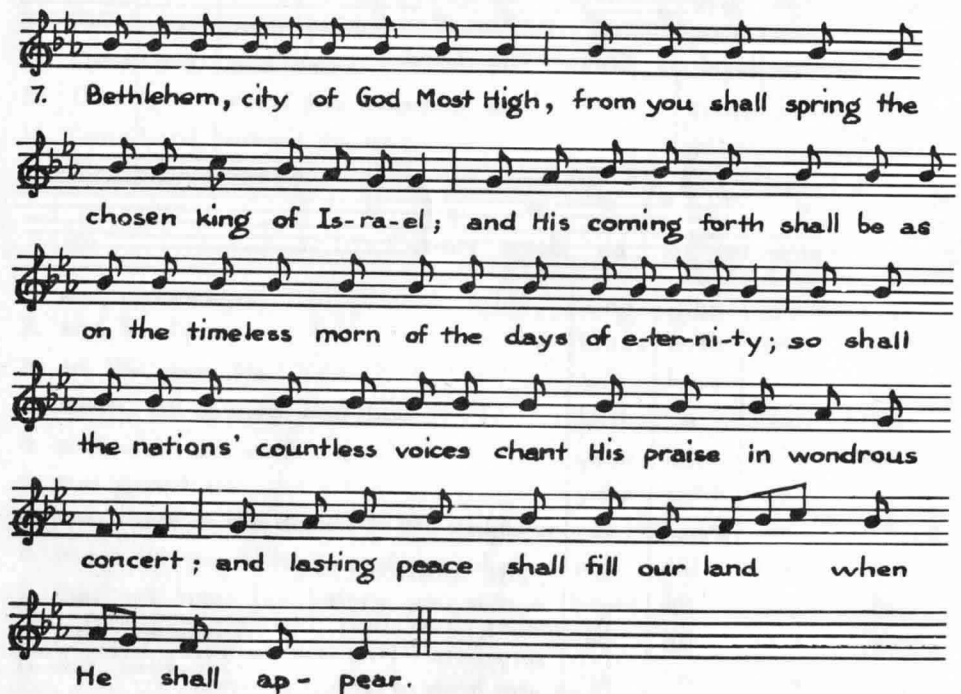
6. For unto us a Boy is born; His name, the God of might and pow-er; He shall sit up-on the throne of David, His father, and rule His peo-ple; for the government rests on His shoulder.

Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come let us a-dore Him.

Chanters



7. Bethlehem, city of God Most High, from you shall spring the chosen king of Is-ra-el; and His coming forth shall be as on the timeless morn of the days of e-ter-ni-ty; so shall the nations' countless voices chant His praise in wondrous concert; and lasting peace shall fill our land when He shall ap-pear.

Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE ADD THIS:

Chanters



To-morrow shall the earth be freed from all in-i-qui-ty,



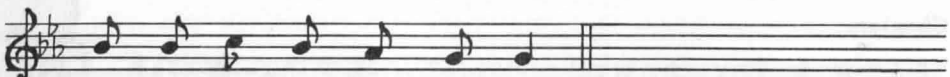
And the Savior of the world shall reign o-ver us.

Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come let us a-dore Him.

Chanters



Near in-deed is Christ the Lord.

Congregation



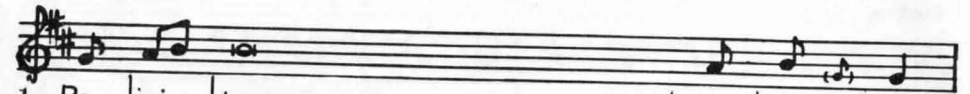
O come, let us a- dore Him.

## II THE SERMONETTE

A reading from Holy Scripture and/or a brief sermonette. Time now for God's living word: Open your heart to the Divine Sower.

## III THE PSALM

A song for meditation. In words taken from the Psalms, we beg Christ to come quickly and bring the world mercy and peace.



1. Re-joyce,	heavens, and, earth,	be joy-ful, *
2. Burst forth,	mountains,	with glad-ness, *
3. Be-cause	the Lord	is com-ing, *
4. Drop down	dew, heavens, and, clouds, rain	the Just One; *
5. O Lord,	do	re-mem-ber us, *
6. Show us,	Lord,	your mer-cy, *
7. Lord, send	the Lamb, ruler of	our na-tion, *
8. Come, Lord	God of hosts, and	de-liv-er us; *
9. Come, Lord,	grant us in peace	your vis-it, *
10. May we	know, Lord, on earth	your pass-ing, *
11. A-rise	with power	and come to us, *
12. Come, Lord,	and delay	no long-er; *
13. On-ly	rend the heavens and	come down to us; *
14. Come, Lord,	unveil to us	your counten-ance, *
15. Glo-ry	to the Father, Son, and Ho-	ly Spir-it, *



1. and, mountains,	sing	glad	prais-	es.
2. and, lowly	hills,	with	jus-	tice.
3. on His poor He	will	have	mer-	cy.
4. earth, be opened and bud	forth	a	Sav-	ior.
5. and visit us with	your	sal-	va-	tion.
6. and grant us	your	sal-	va-	tion.
7. from Petra of the desert to the daughter	of	Sion's	Ho-ly	Moun-t.
8. show us your face, and we shall	see	sal-	va-	tion.
9. that we may joy before you with a heart	all	per-	fect.	
10. your salvation	in	all	na-	tions.
11. and settle	us	in	safe-	ty.
12. loose the bonds	of	your	peo-	ple.
13. how the mountains would melt away	at	your	pres-	ence!
14. who dwell o-	ver	the	Cher-u-	bim.
15. as in the beginning, now and for-	ev-	er.	A-	ment.

IV THE SHORT READING

A thought from the letter to the Hebrews;  
the Christ child is eternal High Priest and  
King of ages, our Mediator with the Father.

Celebrant



Our forerunner, the Lamb without blemish, goes in for us †

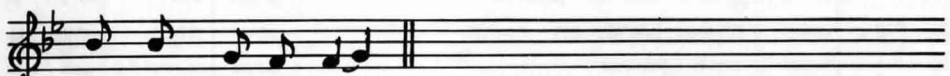


a high priest forever like Melchisedeech; \* He is the King



of justice, without beginning of days or end of life.

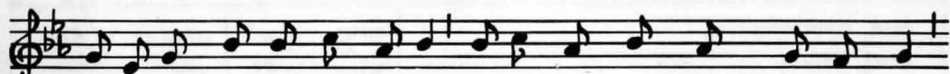
Congregation



All thanks be to God.

V THE HYMN

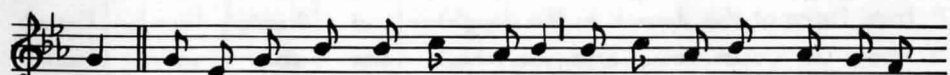
Joy and wonder at the mystery of God made  
man, and the immaculate beauty of His  
Virgin Mother.



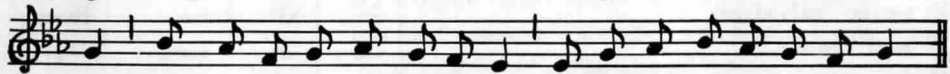
A clarion voice is heard a-far Resounding clear through shadowed night:



"A-rise from slumber's dreaminess, The morning star, Christ, gleams on



high." 2. A gracious Lamb He comes to us To grant release from Adam's



debt; With sorrow for our sinful ways Forgiveness let us all implore.



3. Th'Eternal Framers of the sky A servant's lowly form girds on; Our



flesh in weakness thus to save, Lest we should perish whom He made.



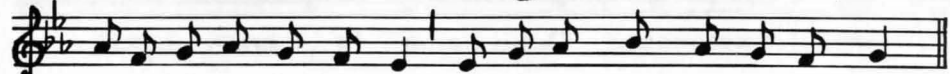
4. On Mary's fair virgin-i-ty The grace of heaven gently falls; En-



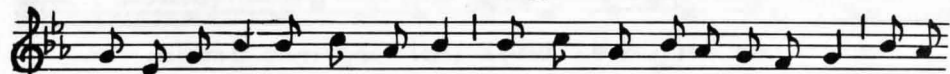
shrined within her spotless womb, Unknown re-pos-es God with us.



5. His ho-ly temple is a maid: At angel's word so wondrously, Un-



sullied by an earthly love, The Virgin knows a mother's joy.



6. To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit-one in three-Unend-

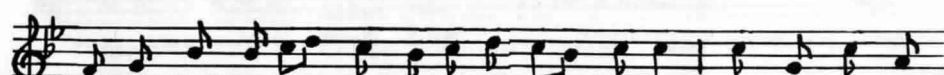


ing e-qual glory sing In time and for e-ter-ni-ty. A - men.

VI OUR LADY'S SONG

Before and after Mary's Song, sing one of  
these antiphons or refrains which sound the  
keynote of the day's liturgy. They are rich  
in scriptural content and most artistic in  
form and melody.

December 16th Antiphon



Lo, the king is com-ing; Lord of all cre- ation, and He shall take



a-way the sins that keep us chained in bondage.

SING OUR LADY'S SONG, p. 16

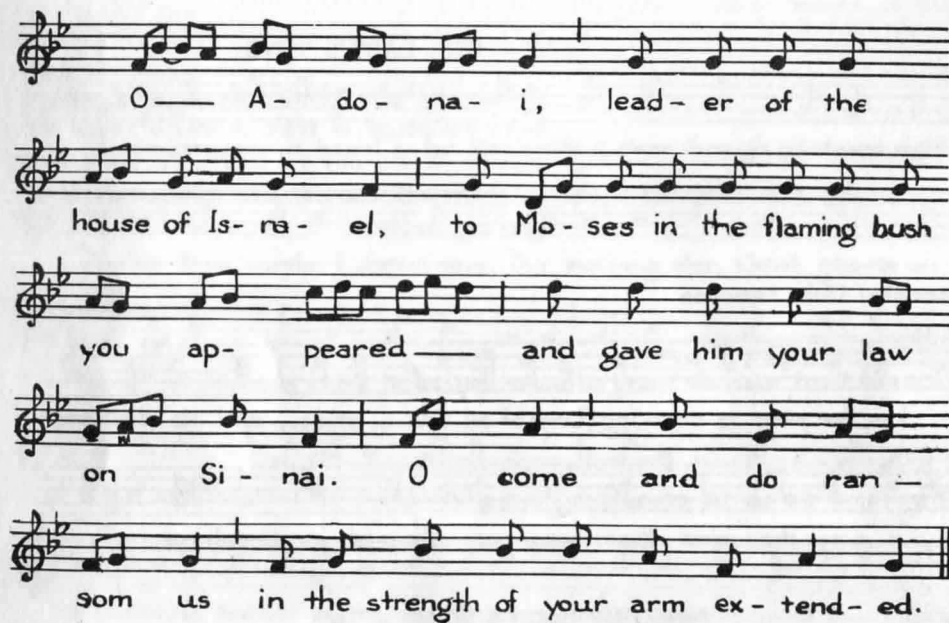
December 17th Antiphon



O — Wis- dom, from the mouth of  
 God pro- ceed- ing and reach- ing from  
 end to end —, dis- pose all things  
 with sweet- ness. O come to en- light-  
 en us in the ways of pru- dence.

SING OUR LADY'S SONG, p. 16

December 18th Antiphon



O — A- do- na- i, lead- er of the  
 house of Is- ra- el, to Mo- ses in the flaming bush  
 you ap- peared — and gave him your law  
 on Si- nai. O come and do ran-  
 som us in the strength of your arm ex- tend- ed.

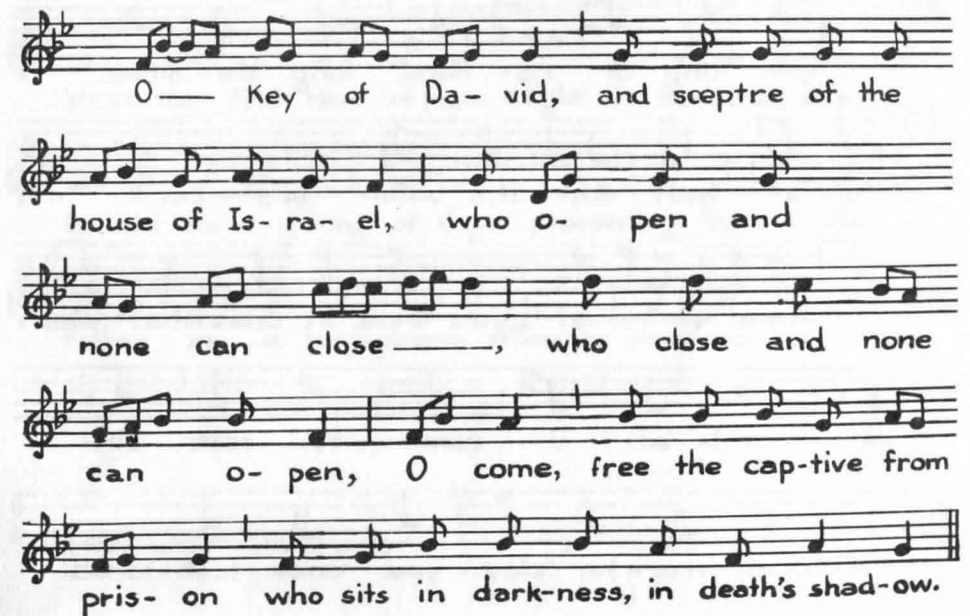
December 19th Antiphon



O — Root of Jes- se, a loft-y standard un-  
 to the na- tions, in your sight kings  
 si- lent shall re- main — while all peoples to you  
 shall ral- ly. O come to de- liv-  
 er us and de- lay no long- er.

SING OUR LADY'S SONG, p. 16

December 20th Antiphon



O — Key of Da- vid, and sceptre of the  
 house of Is- ra- el, who o- pen and  
 none can close —, who close and none  
 can o- pen, O come, free the cap- tive from  
 pris- on who sits in dark- ness, in death's shad- ow.



December 21st Antiphon



O — Ris- ing Day- star, splen- dor of  
 light e- ter- nal and shin- ing sun  
 of jus- tice —, O come, and light with  
 your ra- dian- ce those who in dark-  
 ness dwell and lin- ger in death's shad- ow.

December 22nd Antiphon



O — King of na- tions, long de- sired  
 and a- wait- ed, the build- ers' cor-  
 ner stone —, you bind in one what was  
 di- vid- ed. O come to save sin-  
 ful man, mor- tal clay you once fash- ioned.

December 23rd Antiphon



O — Em- ma- nu- el, our king and  
 leg- is- la- tor, ex- pect- ed of  
 all na- tions — and their on- ly  
 sal- va- tion, O come be our re-  
 deem- er, Lord our God and mas- ter.

December 24th Antiphon



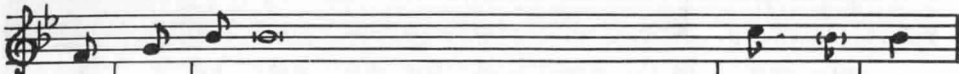
When the first rays of morn \*light the heavens, shall you  
 be- hold the King of kings proceeding from the  
 Father as a bridegroom from His chamber leav- ing.

SING OUR LADY'S SONG, p. 16

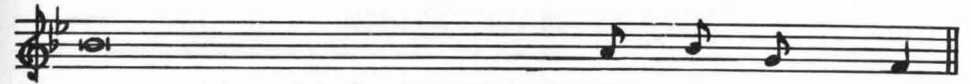
OUR LADY'S SONG



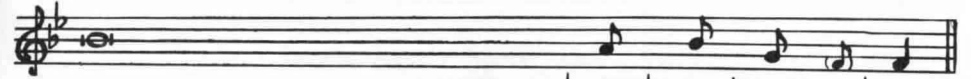
1. My soul mag-ni-fies the Lord \*



2. Be-cause	he has regarded the lowliness of his	hand-	maid *
3. Be-cause	he who is mighty has done great	things for	me *
4. And his	mercy is from generation to gener-	a-	tion *
5. He has	shown the power	of his	arm *
6. He has	put down the mighty	from their	thrones*
7. He has	filled the hungry with	good	things *
8. He has	given help to Israel, his	ser-	vant *
9. E-ven	as he spoke to our	fath-	ers *
10. Glo-ry	to the Father, Son and Holy	Spir-	it *



1. and my spirit rejoices in God my Sav-ior.



2. for, behold, henceforth all generations shall	call	me	bless-	ed.
3. and	ho-	ly	is his	name.
4. on	those	who	fear	him.
5. he has scattered the proud in the	height	of	their con-	ceit
6. and has exalt-	ed	the	hum-	ble.
7. and has sent the rich away	emp-	ty	hand-	ed.
8. mindful	of	his	mer-	cy.
9. to Abraham and to his poster-	ty	for-	ev-	er.
10. as in the beginning, now, and for-	ev-	er.	A-	men.

Repeat the ANTIPHON of the day

VII THE CLOSING PRAYER

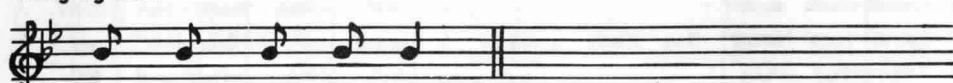
In this prayer of the assembly, summon up all the desire of your heart and the ardor of your love: Come, Lord Jesus!

Celebrant



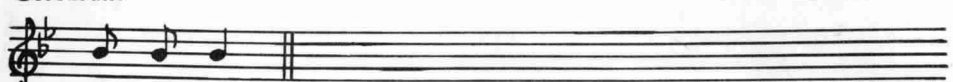
The Lord be with you.

Congregation



And with your spir-it.

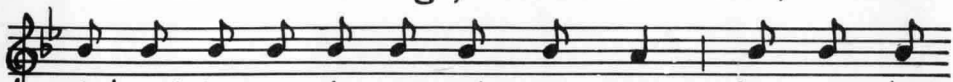
Celebrant



Let us pray.



Make haste, Lord, we beg you, and do not tarry but be



at hand to sustain us with your grace; that we who



lean on your loving constancy may be heartened by the



consoling joys of your coming, Who live and reign,



God, one with the Father and Ho-ly Spirit ages

Congregation



without end. A-men.

HYMN 1

ON JORDAN'S BANK\*



1. On Jor - dan's bank the Bap-tist's cry An-
2. Then cleansed be ev' - ry heart from sin; Make
3. For you are our sal - va - tion, Lord, Our
4. To God the Son all glo - ry be! His



1. noun - ces that the Lord is nigh; A -
2. straight the way of God with - in. Let
3. re - fuge and our great re - ward; Once
4. ad - vent set all na - tions free. Him



1. wake and heark - en for he brings Glad
2. each one his own heart pre - pare For
3. more up - on your peo - ple shine, And
4. with the Fa - ther we a - dore, And



1. tid - ings of the King of kings.
2. Christ to come and en - ter there.
3. fill the world with love di - vine.
4. Ho - ly Spir - it e - ver - more.

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## O COME, O COME, IMMANUEL\*



1. O come, O come, Im-man - u - el, And ran-som
2. O come, Thou Wis- dom, Son di-vine, Our weak-en'd
3. O come, Thou King of all the earth, That we may



1. cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in earth-
2. wills to Thee in - cline! And shed Thy light
3. share Thy won - drous birth! Come rule our heart



1. ly ex - ile here, Un - til the Son of
2. o'er life's dark way, Lest, lured by sin, we
3. and mind and will, That we Thy pre- cepts

## Chorus



1. God ap - pear. Re-joice! Re-joice O Is -
2. go a - stray.
3. may ful-fill.



ra - el, To thee shall come Im-man - u - el.

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