

As we enter the last week of Advent – the final days of anticipation of the coming of our Lord – we mark this time with the beautiful “O Antiphons” of our Church. The antiphons offer us seven titles of our Savior Jesus Christ that reflect who he truly is in the history of salvation and the world – the long awaited Messiah. Let us then take a moment to turn our hearts and minds to the awesome moment when God became flesh and entered our world to bring salvation and life to all.



On that night 2000 years ago in a manger, Jesus Christ was born into the world and our world was forever changed. Shepherds guided by angels came in from their fields and gazed upon the Son of God. Christ the light of the world, born of the Virgin Mary, came to conquer sin and death for all of us. In a homily on Christmas Pope St. Leo the Great offers some beautiful words for us to capture this moment of wonder and awe. I share with you some of that homily below.

*Dearly, beloved, today our Savior is born; let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness.*

*No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no man free from sin, came to free us all. Let the saint rejoice as he sees the palm of victory at hand. Let the sinner be glad as he receives the offer of forgiveness. Let the pagan take courage as he is summoned to life.*

*In the fullness of time, chosen in the unfathomable depths of God’s wisdom, the Son of God took for himself our common humanity in order to reconcile it with its creator. He came to overthrow the devil, the origin of death, in that very nature by which he had overthrown humankind.*

*And so at the birth of our Lord the angels sing in joy: Glory to God in the highest, and they proclaim peace to his people on earth as they see the heavenly Jerusalem being built from all the nations of the world. When the angels on high are so exultant at this marvelous work of God’s goodness, what joy should it not bring to the lowly hearts of men?*

Indeed what indescribable joy resounded in the hearts of those gathered around that lowly manger 2000 years ago. What joy should resound continually in our hearts, minds and souls each Christmas day and every day throughout the year knowing that God who is Emmanuel has walked among us to free us from sin and death.

The birthday of the Lord is the birth of life and peace. As Christians, let us strive to bring that peace and life into our troubled and violent world – the peace and life sent to us by the Father through the Son in union with the Spirit.

This Christmas let the antiphon from Christmas Midnight Mass resound in your heart and bring you great joy – *Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.*

Venite adoremus Dominum.

