

Latin Advent Antiphons
tr. J. M. Neale (1818-1866)

antiphon: Alistair Warwick
hymn melody 'adapted from a French Missal'
by Thomas Helmore (1811-1890)

For the Rev. Colin G McIntosh and the Dunblane-Likhubula Partnership
First Sunday of Advent 2006

O _____
optional drone if hymn is accompanied

1 O come, O come, Em - ma - nu - el, and ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el,
that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here, un - til the Son of God ap - pear:
Re - joice! re - joice! Em - ma - nu - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

2 O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory over the grave.
Rejoice! rejoice!...

4 O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! rejoice!...

3 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! rejoice!...

5 O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times once gave the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! rejoice!...

The inspiration for this setting comes from the writing of a German Catholic priest, Max Josef Metzger, who, before his execution by the Nazis in 1945, wrote:

He knows not Advent's meaning who has never sat
By twilight in a dreary cell, its window dim;
... Evening falls, slowly steals away the sun
Night throws her gloomy mantle around the room
Terrifying, impenetrable.
Will it always be night?
Will ne'er a ray of sunshine pierce the gloom?
And a new day lead on to joy?

The sense of longing in the original Advent 'O' Antiphons is expressed by a four-note melisma E-A-A-G on the 'O'; in this setting these four notes can be found at the beginning of the third section of the chant.