

Sermons in Song – Hymnal Supplement

Hymns of the Season

703 – My Soul In Stillness Waits

(Disc 1, Track 2 Christian Worship Supplement Hymn Sampler)

Refrain

*For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits,
truly my hope is in you.*

1. O Lord of Light, our only hope of glory,
Your radiance shines in all who look to you,
Come, light the hearts of all in dark and shadow.

Refrain

2. O Spring of Joy, rain down upon our spirits,
Our thirsty hearts are yearning for your Word,
Come, make us whole, be comfort to our hearts.

Refrain

3. O Root of Life, implant your seed within us,
And in your advent draw us all to you,
Our hope reborn in dying and in rising.

Refrain

4. O Key of Knowledge, guide us in our pilgrimage,
We ever seek, yet unfulfilled remain,
Open to us the pathway of your peace.

Refrain

“O” Antiphons, adapted

1. How does the refrain capture the pensive yet joyous nature of Advent? In what way(s) is that mood different from the usual feeling of our life in December?
2. How does the name given to Jesus match with what is subsequently said about the Messiah’s work in each verse?
3. Underline the Gospel content of each verse.
4. Look up the following passages from Isaiah and match it to a verse that expounds it:

Isaiah 22:22 _____

Isaiah 9:2 _____

Isaiah 11:10 _____

Isaiah 55:1 _____

Isaiah 9:7 _____

Isaiah 44:3 _____

Isaiah 11:1 _____

5. Listen to this hymn on the CD. How does the music of the hymn match its message?
6. How could our congregation use this hymn in a creative way during its Advent worship (Sunday or Midweek)?
7. Take some time this week and explore the “O Antiphons” upon which this song is based. (For more information about the “O Antiphons,” see the back of this sheet)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (from *Christian Worship Handbook*, pp. 38-39)

In the early centuries of Christian worship, sentences, usually from Scripture, were read or chanted at certain points of the service and were known as antiphons. Among them are seven for use at Vespers in Advent from December 17 to 23, sung, one each day, after the Magnificat. These, sometimes referred to as “The Seven Greater O Antiphons,” date from the sixth or seventh century and are still in use in the Catholic Church. They are invocations addressed to Christ the Messiah under his many biblical titles. Those antiphons begin:

- O Sapientia, quae ex ore altissimi (O Wisdom from on high)
- O Adonai et dux domus Israel (O Lord and leader of the house of Israel)
- O Radix Jesse qui stas in signum populorum (O Root of Jesse who stood as a standard of the people)
- O Clavis David et sceptrum domus Israel (O Key of David and scepter of our home)
- O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae (O Dayspring, splendor of eternal light)
- O Rex gentium, et desideratus earum (O longed-for King of the nations)
- O Emmanuel, rex et legifer noster (O Emmanuel, our king and law-giver)

In early England, an eighth was added, “O Virgo virginum.” During the medieval period, it was customary in some areas for each of the chief officers of the monastery to “keep his O,” or be assigned a given “O” to be sung on a particular day and then to provide a pittance or feast for the monks. According to the roll of officers at Durham around 1600, the duty of the Commoner’s Checker

was to provide for all such spices against Lent as should be comfortable for the said monks for their great austerity both of fasting and praying, and to see a fire continually in the common house hall, for the monks to warm them when they were disposed, and to have always a hogshead of wine for the monks and for the keeping of his O: called “O Sapientia;” and to provide for figs and walnuts against Lent.

Elsewhere, at Fleury, for example, the following assignment was noted:

- Abbott – O Sapientia
- Prior – O Adonai
- Gardener – O Radix Jesse
- Cellarer – O Clavis David
- Treasurer – O Oriens
- Provost – O Rex gentium
- Librarian – O Emmanuel
- Sacrist – O Virgo virginum

About the 12th century, someone wove five of these antiphons, with the order changed to 7, 3, 5, 4, and 2, into a hymn beginning “Veni, veni Immanuel.” The refrain “Rejoice, Rejoice” was apparently added during the 13th century. The first published source of this hymn seems to be the Appendix to the seventh edition of *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum* (Köln, 1710). It is from this version that John M. Neale made a translation, which he included in his *Mediaeval Hymns and Sequences* (London, 1851), beginning “Draw nigh, draw nigh, Emmanuel.” For HAM (1861), Neale altered his own translation to read, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.”

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Hymns of the Season

707 – Peace Came to Earth

(Disc 1, Track 3 Christian Worship Supplement Hymn Sampler)

1. Peace came to earth at last that chosen night
When angels clove the sky with song and light
And God embodied love and sheathed his might –
Who could but gasp: Immanuel!
Who could but sing: Immanuel!
2. And who could be the same for having held
The infant in their arms, and later felt
The wounded hands and side, all doubts dispelled –
Who could but sigh: Immanuel!
Who could but shout: Immanuel!
3. You show the Father none has ever seen,
In flesh and blood you bore our griefs and pain,
In bread and wine you visit us again –
Who could but see: Immanuel!
Who could but thrill: Immanuel!
4. How else could I have known you, O my God!
How else could I have loved you, O my God!
How else could I embrace you, O my God!
Who could but pray: Immanuel!
Who could but praise: Immanuel!

Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919-2008 © 1984 CPH

1. What reactions to “God in the flesh” does the hymn-writer express in the final line of each verse?
2. How is each reaction appropriate to what the verse says? Tell of a time when you felt one or more of these reactions to the truth about Jesus.
3. How is it true that in the birth of Jesus God’s love is embodied and his might sheathed? Why was each necessary?
4. To what future events in Jesus’ life does verse two allude? Why would a Christmas hymn look that far ahead?
5. In verse three in what way does the hymn-writer connect Jesus’ incarnation to the present?

6. In verse four how does the hymn-writer apply the first Christmas to us today? What is the progression of thought in this verse?
7. What does the name “Immanuel” mean? What is the author’s intent in repeating this name?
8. Listen to this hymn on the CD. Do the text and music lend themselves to a Christmas Eve service or a Christmas Day service?
9. This hymn text was written by the sainted Jaroslav Vajda, an impressive figure in 20th century hymnody. In the week ahead, examine the texts of other Vajda hymns in *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal*, *Let All the People Praise You*, and *Christian Worship Supplement*. (CW 54, 172, 218, 231, 300, 332, 342; LAPPY p. 20, 162, 282, 312; CWS 707, 708, 712, 717, 738)